Peace in whose time? Ripeness and local negotiated agreements The Sangin Accord, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2011

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King's College London

Peace in whose time?

Ripeness and local negotiated agreements: the Sangin Accord, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2011.

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May this work serve in some small way as a constant candle, honouring people in all walks of life who sit together and talk when other paths persist.

A haiku, for my Grandparents

Generations past,

did more, for longer, with less.

To you, gracious thanks.

Lanterns in the dusk

For those who wait.

The scarred, of soul and frame.

All whose homecoming never came.

I remember you.

Acknowledgements, Declarations, and Copyright

Acknowledgements

Deep appreciation is due to all who supported me throughout this labyrinth. Friends, enduring, and unexpected. Family, and loved ones held close to my heart. Only your generosity, with time, expertise, and care, has made this possible.

For Mike Williams, Stuart Gordon, Theo Farrell, Tim Clack, and Rob Johnson. You made this real from the rough: honing this project, and this person.

To those who saved my life. And others who saved my future.

Thank you.

Declarations

I recognise the constructive support given by the UK Ministry of Defence.

I record here that the Ministry requested no alteration to the title, scope, and text of this work at any point: neither before or after the King's College London examination, nor prior to publication in the university library.

Copyright

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Abstract

Negotiated agreements are vital policy options for parties in conflict and those seeking conflict resolutions, as military action alone can rarely achieve "the political resolution of the drivers of conflict" required for lasting stability and reconciliation.[1] 21st Century Western-led interventions into conflict areas no longer seek conquest or permanent direct rule. Instead, moral, legal and policy imperatives make the "focus on supporting the local populace and the host nation government."[2] If international militaries (with development and diplomatic activity) "cannot achieve lasting success without the HN [Host Nation] government achieving legitimacy"[3] then to be useful, academic theory and scholarly analysis of negotiated agreements must explain the impact of military action on the legitimacy of government as a negotiating partner.

A central debate in negotiation theory is whether the *substance* of negotiations determines success, or if *timing* is decisive. William Zartman's Ripeness theory considers timing definitive, but also encompasses issues of substance, combining both major arguments.[4] It is also the only theory to link the onset of genuine negotiation to military power – the most heavily resourced arm of government – closely matching real-world strategy and policy options. The thesis makes two important contributions. First, it introduces the Sangin Accord as an historical case study, an agreement negotiated in Afghanistan's Helmand Province from 2008-2010 and made public in January 2011. This is the first detailed, political history and assessment of the Sangin Accord yet published. Second, it explores Ripeness theory as an explanatory tool for a negotiated political agreement at the local level – since it was originally derived from inter-state case studies in Africa during the Cold War (though more recently it has been applied to civil wars). Here "local" means "subprovincial," and refers "to district-

[1] All academic terms used in this abstract are defined when first used in the main text.
Quote from British Army, *Field Manual Vol 1. Part 10 Countering Insurgency* (London: The Stationary Office, 2009), paragraph 8-6.

[2] US Army, *Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), paragraph 2-2.

[3] Ibid., paragraph 1-120.

[4] Zartman's initial theory is set out in I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict Resolution in Africa*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). It is later updated in I. William Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond," in *Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, ed. D. Druckman and P. Stern, (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000).

or village-specific issues."[5] The conclusions offer observations on applying Ripeness theory when intervening to seek political reconciliation in a local area removed from centralised authority, and without a permanent military advantage – termed here as 'fringe areas'. It highlights the impact of history (both received and remembered), and traumatic experiences, on memory, perception and rationality; vital factors for Ripeness theory. Finally, it explores the paradox between policymakers' desire to negotiate from a position of strength, and Ripeness theory's contradictory requirement for a mutually perceived hurting stalemate – simultaneously alongside a political Way Out – as essential preconditions to genuine negotiation.


THE TIMES
Afghanistan
News | Opinion | Business | Money | Sport | Life | Arts | Puzzles | Papers
Afghan tribal elders promise to stop attacks on troops in Sangin
Article | Graphic
Jerome Starkey Kabul
Last updated January 4 2011 12:01AM
American and Afghan officials claim to have brokered a landmark peace deal in Sangin, the town in central Helmand which has been the location of almost a third of Britain's Afghan fatalities.
Members from the Taliban after voluntarily handing over their weapons and joining the government in Sangin district of Helmand

Figure 1: The Times Online reports Helmand Provincial Governor Gulab Mangal's public announcement of the Sangin Accord, 4th January 2011.[6]

[5] Severine Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 43.

[6] The image is a screenshot (full article available to subscribers only): The Times, "Afghan Tribal Elders Promise to Stop Attacks on Troops in Sangin," 4th January 2011, http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/asia/afghanistan/article2861680.ece.

Abbreviations and acronyms

AD – Anno Domini.

AH – Anno Hijiri, denoting the Islamic calendar.

ANA – Afghan National Army.

ANP – Afghan National Police.

ANSF – Afghan National Security Forces.

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation.

CIA – United States Central Intelligence Agency.

COIN – Counterinsurgency.

DfID – UK Department for International Development.

DG – (Afghan) District Governor.

EU – European Union.

FOI – (UK) Freedom of Information (Act, 2000).

FCO – (UK) Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

GIRoA – Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

HN – Host Nation.

IAC – Internal Armed Conflict.

IED – Improvised Explosive Device.

ISAF – International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan).

ISI – (Pakistan's) Inter-Services Intelligence Agency.

KCL – King's College London University.

The text (only) is on the author's personal website at: Jerome Starkey, "Afghan Tribal Elders Promise to Stop Attacks on Troops in Sangin," 2011, http://www.jeromestarkey.com/post/2592771525/afghan-tribal-elders-promise-to-stop-attacks-on-troops(accessed 12th October 2014 - both sources).

KGB – Russian intelligence agency (1954-1991). Literally, the Committee for State Security.

MEO – Mutually Enhancing Opportunity.

MHS – Mutually Hurting Stalemate.

MOD – United Kingdom Ministry of Defence.

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

NDS – Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security, akin to domestic intelligence.

NWFP – Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province.

OSCE – Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

PRT – Provincial Reconstruction Team.

QDDR – (The United States') Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.

QST – Quetta Shura Taliban. Commonly used to refer to the Taliban leadership.

RC – Regional Command, a sub-division of ISAF. For example, Regional Command (South) becomes RC(S), or RC (South).

UK – United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

UN – United Nations.

US – United States of America.

USMC – United States Marine Corps.

USV – Upper Sangin Valley.

Glossary of Afghan language and cultural terms

This section includes an explanation of necessary terms used in Afghanistan. Afghanistan uses two languages, Dari and Pashto. In contemporary use, *Dari* refers to the dialects of modern Persian language spoken in Afghanistan, and known as "Afghan Persian" in some Western sources. As defined in the Constitution of Afghanistan, it is one of the two official languages of Afghanistan.[7] Pashto [alternative: Pushtu] is the language of the Pashtun. The Pashtun are the predominant ethnolinguistic element within Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan, constituting a population of between fifty to sixty million."[8] Pashto is a national language of Afghanistan, alongside Dari. These languages are sometimes mixed in the same sentence in colloquial Afghan dialogue, and Arabic words are at times imported. I have not distinguished between them here. Where these terms are first used in the text they are shown in italics, and where necessary, a fuller definition has been given.

Arbakai – an Afghan collective community defence mechanism.

Fatwa – an Islamic religious pronouncement.

Jihad – one of the Islamic duties, literally, "the struggle" (though it need not signify violence). People engaged in jihad are mujahidin (see below).

Jerib – Afghan unit of area usually used in agriculture, typically relating to around 2km^2.

Jirga – an Afghan decision-making council or assembly.

Kalay – village.

Kiriz – an irrigation canal.

Loya Jirga – a traditional "Grand Assembly" at which national or highly significant leaders are chosen.

Mirab – Afghan community-appointed stewards of the waterways.

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[7] King's College London, "Modern Language Centre: Languages We Offer - Dari," 2014, http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/mlc/about/languages/dari.aspx(accessed 6th August 2014).
[8] SOAS, "Languages of the near & Middle East at SOAS: Pashto," 2014, http://www.soas.ac.uk/nme/languages/languages-of-the-near-middle-east-at-soas-pashto.html(accessed 27th July 2014).

Mujahidin – Islamic holy warriors (singular: *mujahid*).

Mullah – religious leader, akin to a priest.

Qala – castle or fort.

Shura – (Pashto) an Afghan community meeting, considered slightly less formal than a jirga. Binding decisions are still taken and attendance may be wider.

Talib – the Arabic word for “student”. In addition to singular and plural, Arabic has a dual form of a noun, meaning a pair. The Arabic word for “two students” is Taliban, imported into Pashto as the plural meaning “students”.

Note on transliteration, naming, and referencing style

Transliteration and Afghan words

Afghan terms, words, names, and labels are written in English in the format used by the United Kingdom's civilian or military command chain in Helmand during the author's time there between September 2009 and July 2010. Where possible they have been referenced from a declassified document or unclassified source.

I have attempted to validate and reference the spellings of Afghan words, and have used italic emphasis to highlight these words the first time they are used – including by adding my own emphasis to quotations. Any errors are my own. I have made no changes to foreign language words when quoted directly, and where spellings differ from the terms typically used in the thesis I have used square brackets to show the correlation, for example, the city of Qandahar [Kandahar].

Key terms, dates, places, and names

Essential terminology, acronyms, abbreviations, and some names, are defined and referenced when first mentioned in the text. Terms that name a specific organisation (e.g. Afghan Government), job title (Provincial Governor), or administrative area (Sangin District) are capitalised. The core components of Ripeness theory are capitalised, to make clear that analysis relates specifically to that theory: the Way Out; Mutually Hurting Stalemate, Ripe Moment. The terms Ripe and Ripeness, where they relate to the theoretical conditions of Ripeness theory are also capitalised.

Dates are presented in the Western Gregorian calendar, and AD or BC is added where clarification is helpful. Selected dates are also given in the Islamic calendar, for example, the last Persian Shah was assassinated by his Generals in 1747 AD (1160 AH).

Referencing and Primary Sources

A slightly expanded version of Endnote's Turabian Bibliography format is used.[9]

Quotes referenced from the translated primary sources are edited only for improvements in English fluency. These changes are shown in [squared brackets].

[9] University of Western Australia, "Oxford Referencing Style: A Guide to Using the Oxford Note Citation Referencing Style for Footnotes and Reference Lists," 2014, http://guides.is.uwa.edu.au/content.php?pid=385139&sid=3156563(accessed 27th July 2014).

List of Figures

The thesis contains the following maps, images, diagrams and tables:

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- Figure A-1: List of Afghan primary source interviewees and key characteristics.
- Figure B-1: UK Government documents released under the Freedom of Information Act (2000).
- Figure C-1: Pashtun tribal structures.
- Figure D-1: The Times trails the possibility of an Accord in Sangin, August 2010.
- Figure E-1: Map showing the distribution of Afghanistan's ethnicities.

Timeline

Dates	Ruler	Succession Method
(1722-1738)	(Mahmud Mir Hotek)	(Significant Pre-Afghan leader and events). (Conquered Persian capital). (Later expelled).
1747-1772	Ahmad Shah Durrani	Assassinated Persian generals, then declared independence; considered the birth of Afghanistan. Natural death.
1772-1793	Timur Shah	Inherited: Eldest son of Durrani. Violently suppressed uprising led by his brother. Natural death.
1793-1800	Zaman Shah	No heir named. Overcame six or more rivals, from 23 sons – in a lengthy dispute. Himself deposed, blinded.
1800-1803	Shah Mahmud	Deposed his brother, Zaman Shah. Himself deposed, imprisoned.
1803-1809	Shah Shuja	Deposed his brother Shah Mahmud. Also deposed, exiled to India.
1809-1818	Shah Mahmud	Restored, deposing his brother Shah Shuja. Deposed, after killing Dost Mohammad's brother.
1819-1838	Dost Mohammad	Declared himself Amir of Kabul. Deposed by UK, first Afghan war.
1839-1842	Shah Shuja	Restored by the British. Assassinated by Barakzai rivals.
1842-1863	Dost Mohammad	British didn't oppose his return after Shuja killed. Died naturally.
1863-1879	Sher Ali	3rd son of Dost Mohammad (defeated his brothers' factions). Accession was part of 2nd Afghan War. Died naturally.
1880-1901	Abdur Rahman Khan	Self-appointed. Treaty with UK. Natural death.
1901-1919	Habibullah	Succession as oldest son of Abdur Rahman. Assassinated.

1919-1929	Ammanullah	Son of Habibullah, resisted his uncles' claims. Exiled (to Italy).
1929-1933	Nadir Shah	Descended from Dost Mohammad. Returned from France, shot his rivals. Assassinated.
1933-1973	Zahir Shah	Succeeded his father Nadir Shah. Later deposed, exiled.
1973-1978	Mohammad Daoud	Prime Minister. Overthrew his brother Zahir Shah. Killed by Communists.
1978-1979	Nur Taraki	Installed in coup. Assassinated.
1979	Hafizullah Amin	Promoted after death of Taraki. KGB assassination.
1979-1986	Babrak Karmal	KGB installation. Soviet President Gorbachev forced his resignation.
1986-1992	Dr. Mohammad Najibullah	KGB installation. Fled mujahidin, later killed by Taliban in 1996.
1992-1996	Burhanuddin Rabbani	Political leader for most of the Mujahidin Government, after that coalition captured Kabul. Deposed by Taliban, fled – retained position as rival to Taliban Islamic Emirate. (Assassinated by Taliban 2011 while Chairman of the High Peace Council, in Karzai's government).
1996-2001	Mullah Mohammad Omar	Conquered Kabul (and other parts of the country), founding an Islamic Emirate under Taliban rule. Deposed after the US-backed Northern Alliance defeated Taliban in 2001. Confirmed dead in 2015.
2004-2014	Hamid Karzai	Interim leader under UN-mandated process. Elected President by traditional gathering (2002) and formal ballot in 2004. Stood for two terms, and retired.
2014-present	Dr. Ashraf Ghani	Elected in 2014. Still serving.

Figure 2: Afghanistan's turbulent leadership changes.[10]

[10] Data from Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers* (PublicAffairs, 2011), pp. 720-3.

Reference maps

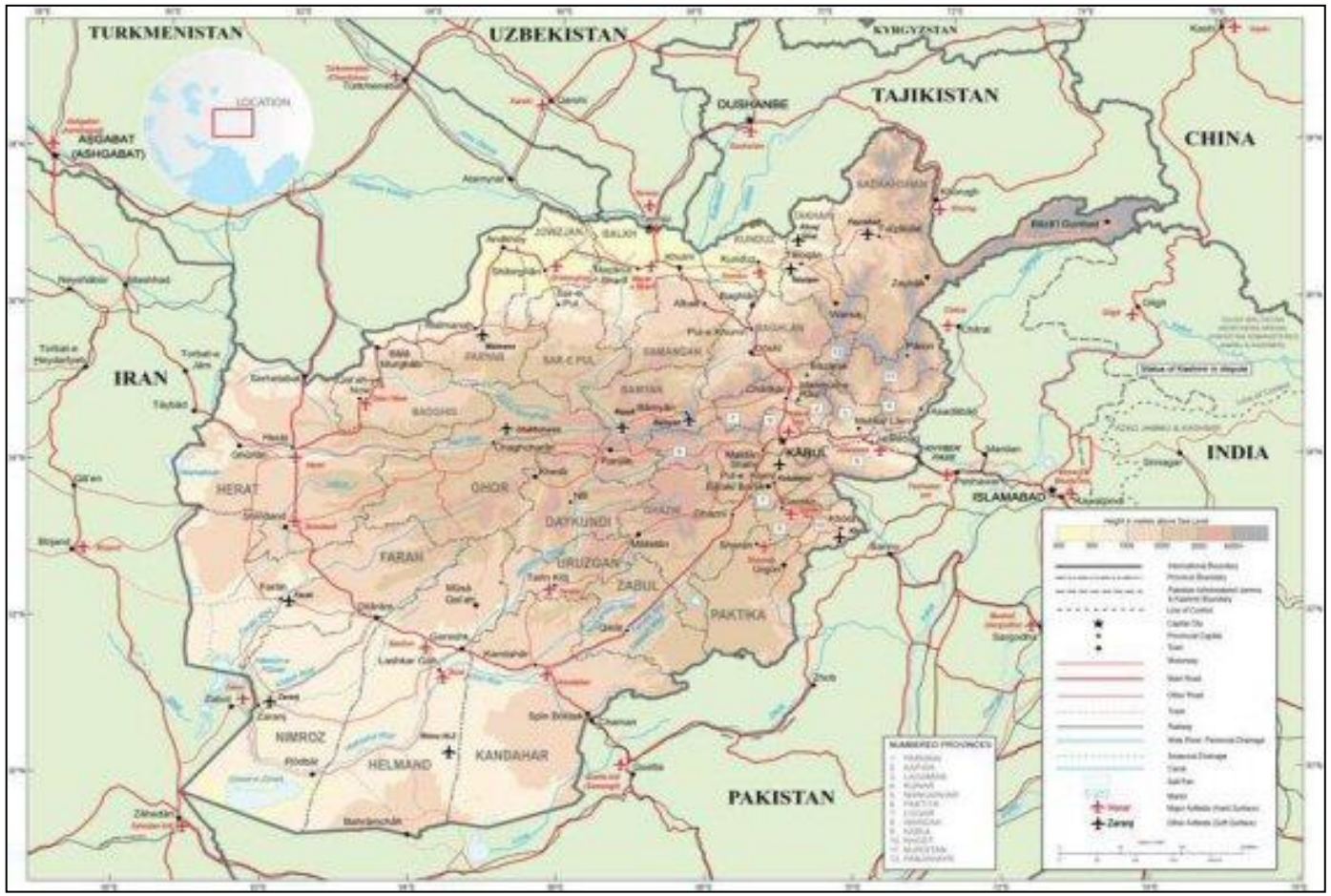
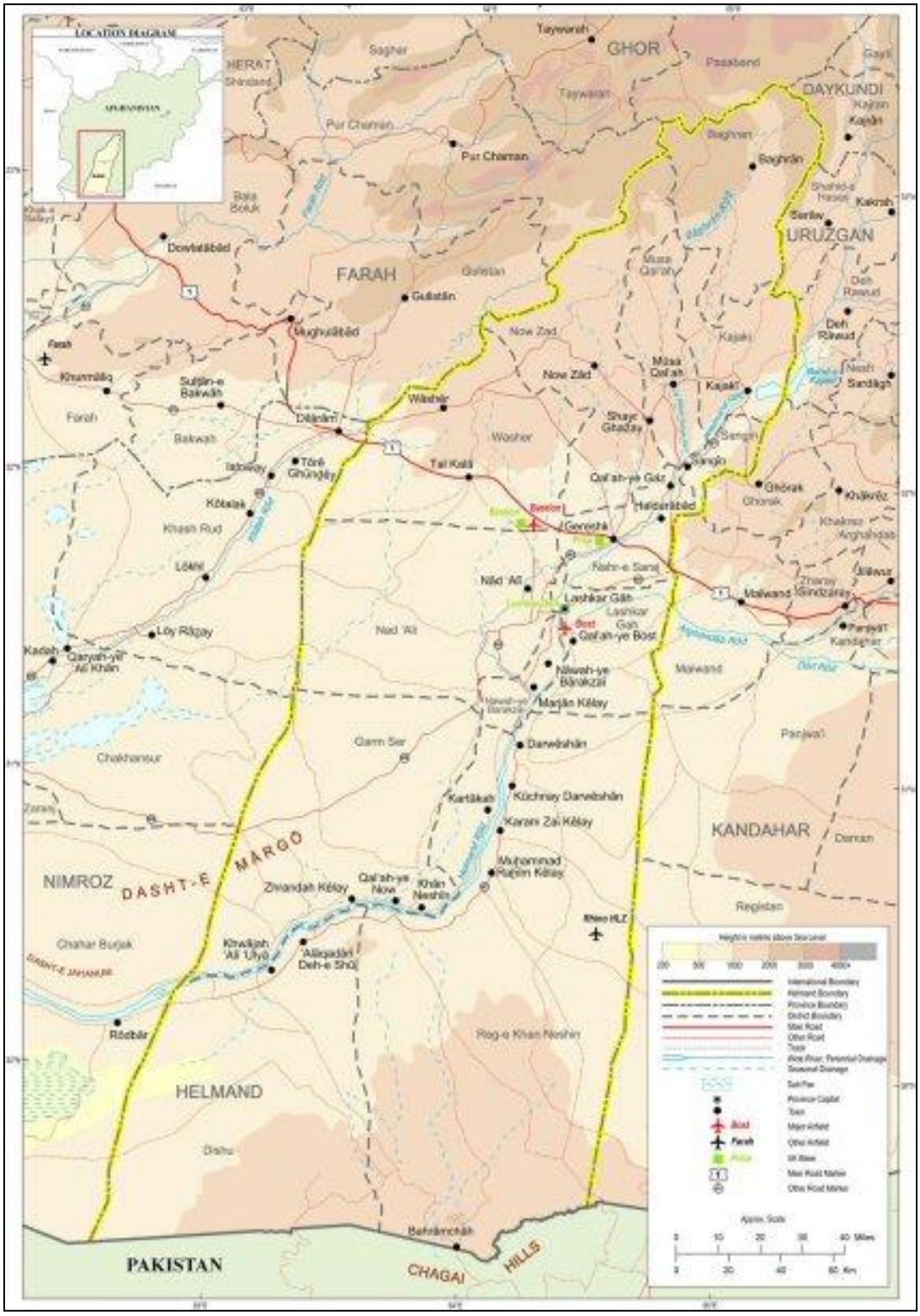


Figure 3: Afghanistan. Helmand Province is in the south-west, with Sangin located on the upper reaches of the Helmand River valley to the east of Musa Qaleh. Image: Crown Copyright, 2013. Used with permission.


LOCATION DIAGRAM
HERAT
Shindand
Sagher
Taywarah
GHOR
Passabend
DAYKUNDI
Kajran
Kajaki
Baghran
Shahid-e Hasas
Kakrak
Sarlav
URUZGAN
Deh Rawud
Nesh
Sandagh
Pur Charman
Baka Boluk
Dowlatabad
FARAH
Gulestan
Musa Qaleh
Now Zad
Kajaki
Sangin
Ghorak
Khakrez
Khakrez Arghandab
Shilzur
Malwand
Kandahar
Panjwai
Lashkar Gah
Gereshk
Helmand
Nad 'Ali
Marjah
Darweshan
Chakhansur
Garm Sir
Kartakah
Karani Zai Kiliay
KANDAHAR
Daman
Registan
NIMROZ
DASHT-E MARGO
Zirandah Kiliay
Qal'ah-ye Nova
Khan Neshin
Rig-e Khan Neshin
Chahar Burjak
Khwajah 'Ali Uyo
'Alikaddari
Deh-e Shaj
Rodbar
Dishu
Bahramchah
PAKISTAN
CHAGAI HILLS
Bost
Farah
Kandahar
Kabul
Herat
Shindand
Kandahar
Lashkar Gah
Gereshk
Bost
Qal'ah-ye Bost
Nawah-ye Barakzai
Marjah Kiliay
Muhammad Rahim Kiliay
Khwajah 'Ali Uyo
'Alikaddari
Deh-e Shaj
Rodbar
Bahramchah
Rhino HLZ
Qaryah-yi 'Ali Khan
Loy Rigay
Kadah
Kushkak
Khash Rud
Farah
Bakwah
Khanmaliq
Sultan-e Bakwah
Dilaram
Tarok Ghundey
Kushkak
Lowki
Washer
Wadhir
Tal Kuti
Now Zad
Shaye Ghaday
Musa Qal'ah
Kajaki
Sangin
Qal'ah-ye Gaz
Haidarabad
Ghorak
Khakrez
Nahr-e Saraj
Nad 'Ali
Lashkar Gah
Bost
Qal'ah-ye Bost
Malwand
Kandahar
Panjwai
Nawah-ye Barakzai
Marjah Kiliay
Darweshan
Kushkak
Kuchnay Darweshan
Karani Zai Kiliay
Muhammad Rahim Kiliay
Zirandah Kiliay
Qal'ah-ye Nova
Khan Neshin
Rig-e Khan Neshin
Chahar Burjak
Khwajah 'Ali Uyo
'Alikaddari
Deh-e Shaj
Rodbar
Dishu
Bahramchah
Rhino HLZ
Qaryah-yi 'Ali Khan
Loy Rigay
Kadah

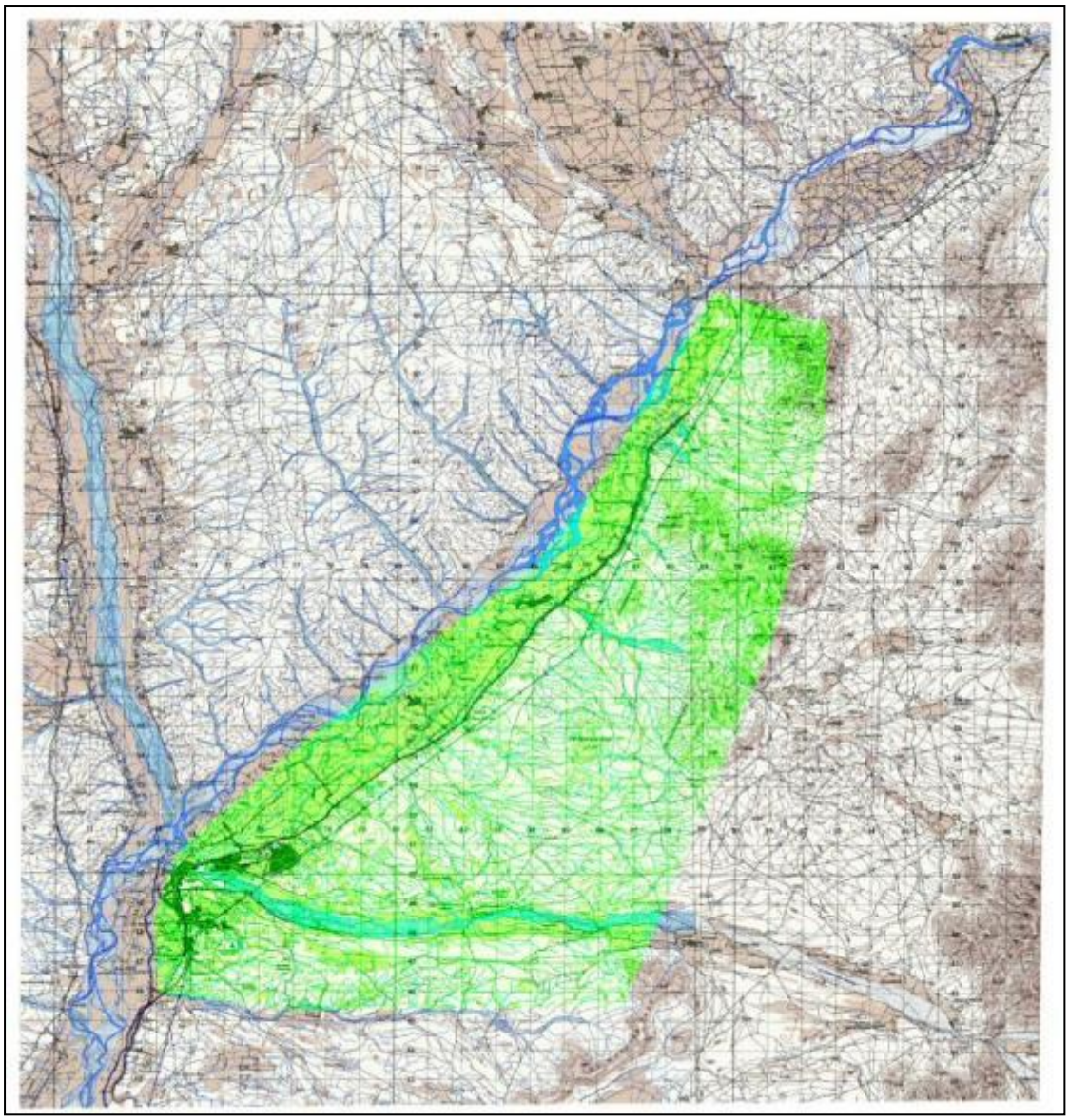


Figure 5: Sangin District (marked approximately in green) and the topography of the Upper Sangin Valley. The populations covered by the Sangin Accord lived in this area, territory dominated by the Helmand River and the connected irrigation system and framed by sharp mountain outcrops. Image: Crown Copyright, 2013. Used with permission.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Why study the Sangin Accord?

The Sangin Accord[11] of 2011 is one of a very small number of publicised political agreements from the recent Afghanistan campaign and it came about, somewhat unexpectedly, in one of the country's most violent districts.[12] The 2006 Musa Qala Accord (alternative spelling, Musa Qaleh) is one of the few other local events, occurring in the neighbouring district to Sangin. There was no public national-level political process between the Afghan Government and the Taliban at that time.[13] A detailed case study of the Sangin Accord is therefore valuable in its own right as an historical record, but also for two further reasons. First, it adds new data to the ongoing debate about the relative importance of negotiation in any conflict strategy. Second, it explores the role of either the stalemate or the position of strength as necessary precursors to a negotiated genuine agreement to resolve conflict.

There is no universal theoretical definition of a negotiated agreement, and so when used here it should be considered as a statement of shared intent reached by communication between conflict parties and agreed and formalised by their representatives, with or without mediators. It usually addresses some or all of the drivers of the conflict, or interim steps towards them, and is usually recorded in writing or other locally appropriate indicators of commitment. Finally, the case study illustrates Ripeness theory's relative value as an explanatory tool for negotiations at the local level. The local is an important level of analysis (best considered alongside assessments of wider geographical areas), especially in areas where authority is disputed and centralised political engagement struggles to address local grievances and historical conflict drivers. Specifically, William Zartman's Ripeness theory is used,

[11] The capitalised term 'Accord' is used only to name this agreement and confers no academic characteristics on the nature of the agreement itself, or on the process by which it was reached. Some US sources prefer 'Sangin Security Agreement' rather than Accord. For example, American Commanding General Richard Mills: "Local elders from the Sangin area approached Gov. Mangal and myself to discuss what I would term an important security agreement." See Afghanistan ISAF Joint Command, "Afghan, Coalition Leaders Broker Peace Deal in Sangin," ISAF Joint Command, Afghanistan, 2011, http://www.rs.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/afghan-coalition-leaders-broker-peace-deal-in-sangin.html(accessed 11th January 2015).

[12] The term Sangin is given to both a town and an administrative district in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. This is shown on maps in the Reference Maps section of the Front Matter.

[13] For more on the Musa Qala case study see for example Michael Semple, *Reconciliation in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2009).

which is "intended to explain why, and therefore when, parties to a conflict are susceptible to their own or others' efforts to turn the conflict toward resolution through negotiation."[14] Ripeness theory is very specific, aiming only to describe the conditions present at the opening of genuine negotiations focused on conflict resolution. Here, conflict resolution means "the elimination of the causes of the underlying conflict, generally with the agreement of the parties" – a process which is "rarely achieved by direct action and is more frequently achieved only over long periods of time."[15] As Zartman says,

> "It is difficult at the outset to determine whether negotiations are indeed serious or sincere, and indeed "true" and "false" motives may be indistinguishably mixed in the minds of the actors themselves at the beginning. Yet it is the onset of negotiations that are the subject of the theory."[16]

Zartman's writing is influential within scholarship about negotiations, significantly developing the field.[17] This credibility, alongside two further reasons,

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[14] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 228.

[15] Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit.*, p. 8.

[16] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 227.

[17] For a full list of Zartman's influential works and academic achievements see Johns Hopkins University, "I. William Zartman Biography," 2016, https://www.sais-jhu.edu/i-william-zartman(accessed 16th January 2016).

Core references for Ripeness theory include: I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* (New York: Oxford, 1985); Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit*; Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit*; I. William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments," *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* vol. 1, no. 1 (2001); I. William Zartman, *Power and Negotiation*, ed. I. William Zartman and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

Zartman's work has catalysed significant scholarship. Detailed literature reviews setting Ripeness theory within the field of negotiation theory and its evolutions can be found in Dean G. Pruitt, *Whither Ripeness Theory? Working Paper No. 25* (George Mason University: Institute for Conflict Management and Resolution, 2005); Peter T. Coleman et al., "Reconstructing Ripeness I: A Study of Constructive Engagement in Protracted Social Conflicts," *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* vol. 26, no. 1 (2008); Peter T. Coleman et al., "Reconstructing Ripeness II: Models and Methods for Fostering Constructive Stakeholder Engagement across Protracted Divides," *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* vol. 26, no. 1 (2008).

Scholars have also sought to apply Ripeness to specific conflict types and case studies: I. William Zartman, *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*, ed. I. William Zartman (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1995); Daniel Lieberfeld, "Conflict "Ripeness" Revisited: The South African and Israeli/Palestinian Cases," *Negotiation Journal* vol. 15, no. 1 (1999); Philip A. Schrodt, Ömür Yilmaz, and Deborah J. Gerner, "Evaluating "Ripeness" and "Hurting Stalemate" in Mediated International Conflicts: An Event Data Study of the Middle East, Balkans, and West Africa," University of Kansas, 2003, http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/papers.dir/Schrodt.etal.ISA03.pdf(accessed 22nd June 2013). The impact of policy choices on Ripeness is an emerging area, such as I.W. Zartman and G.O. Faure, *Engaging Extremists: Trade-Offs, Timing, and Diplomacy* (United States Institute of Peace Press, 2011); L. Podszun, *Does Development Aid Affect Conflict Ripeness?: The Theory of Ripeness and Its Applicability in the Context of Development Aid* (VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011).

In addition to theory, Zartman is also widely published on the practice of negotiation, including I. William Zartman, "The Structuralist Dilemma in Negotiation," *Integrating Internal Displacement into*

justify the selection of Ripeness theory (defined and explained in detail later in this chapter) as the explanatory framework assessed by the Sangin case study: first, it incorporates elements of the other approaches within negotiation theory; second, it is the only theory to account for the impact of military action on genuine negotiation. If, during conflict, theory could define operational methods to illustrate relative progress towards a negotiating opportunity in near-real time, it would be truly useful in deeply violent areas like Sangin. The core question considered by this thesis is therefore, "What does the Sangin Accord case study illustrate about the explanatory value of Ripeness theory for negotiated agreements at the local level?"

Why focus on negotiation and on Ripeness, given the range of alternative theories of conflict termination and resolution? The primary reason is that policy makers continue to expect negotiated agreements to be possible, describe them using the language of Ripeness theory, and in prominent cases actively seek them as conflict outcomes.[18] In 2011, US State Department Assistant Secretary Rose Goetmoeller (Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance) referred to a sense within the international community that the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty was "Ripe for negotiation."[19] In 2002, Rosemary Hollis (a former director of Chatham House), presenting evidence to the United Kingdom's House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee, suggested that the peace camps within the Israel-Palestinian conflict "need a signal that the international community has not abandoned all hope and can envisage a peaceful resolution of the conflict even if the time is not yet Ripe for

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Peace Processes and Agreements: resource kit to accompany Guide for mediators (1997). http://id.cdint.org/content/documents/The_Structuralist_Dilemma_in_Negotiation.pdf (accessed 21st January 2012); I. William Zartman and Maureen Berman, *The Practical Negotiator* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); I William Zartman, "Negotiating with Terrorists," *International Negotiation* vol. 8, no. 3 (2003); I William Zartman, *Negotiation and Conflict Management: Essays on Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2007).

[18] See for example Council of the European Union, "Presidency Conclusions," 2007, http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/documents/eu_kosovo/european_council_conclusions_14_dec_2007_en.pdf(accessed 22nd March 2011). Also Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines, "EU Expands Its Support to the Peace Process in Mindanao," 2012, http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/philippines/documents/press_corner/20120720.pdf(accessed 26th August 2012). Or European Union, "EU Statement in Response to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, H.E. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko," 2012, http://www.osce.org/pc/71115?download=true(accessed 29th August 2012).

[19] Rose Goettemoeller, "Progress on Commencing Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty Negotiations," 2011, http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/179167.htm(accessed 10th October 2012).

reaching a peace agreement."[20] This element of the rationale for focusing on negotiated agreement, and Ripeness theory, is expanded later in this chapter.

Significant disagreement remains over how conflicts actually end. There are roughly three lines of analysis: first, whether war is linear or dynamic; the second assesses the relative significance of conflict drivers; the third considers how judgements about conflict termination choices are made. The first focus considers negotiation as a conflict outcome, or a phase in a conflict spectrum. For example in studies of war termination – negotiation is considered "the last stage in a war once basic political objectives of the war are within reach," signifying "the transition from war to peace."[21] In such analyses it is possible to consider negotiation as simply a mechanism for validating the successful application of other approaches – a victor's peace.[22] The concept of the Liberal Peace also attempts to define a standard process to conflict termination: it is an outcome that is universal, attainable, and achieving it is dependent upon a specific methodology.[23]

Attempts to define conflict phases lend themselves to models of conflict termination that also favour binary choices, applied at specific recognisable times. Zartman summarises conflict theorists, observing that "negotiation is only one of a family of approaches to the settlement of conflict; the others are domination, capitulation, inaction, withdrawal, and the intervention of third parties."[24] In this analysis, the type of war becomes significant for theory, since distinctions in observable conflict characteristics suggest different approaches are required to end

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[20] Rosemary Hollis, "Select Committee on Foreign Affairs Minutes of Evidence," (2002). http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmfaff/384/2022602.htm (accessed 29th May 2012).

[21] Oliver P Richmond, "Patterns of Peace," *Global Society* 20, no. 4 (2006); Rose M. Kadende-Kaiser and Paul J. Kaiser, "Phases of Conflict in Africa," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* vol. 38, no. 2-3 (2003); Linda Legier-Topp, *War Termination: Setting Conditions for Peace* (DTIC Document, 2009).

[22] Kristine Höglund and Camilla Orjuela, "Winning the Peace: Conflict Prevention after a Victor's Peace in Sri Lanka," *Contemporary Social Science* vol. 6, no. 1 (2011).

[23] Richmond, 2006, o*p. cit.*, p. 367. On the general theory see John M. Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War: American Politics and International Security* (Cornell University Press, 2000); Michael W. Doyle, "Three Pillars of the Liberal Peace," *American Political Science Review* vol. 99, no. 3 (2005). For a specific case study see Kristian Stokke, "Crafting Liberal Peace? International Peace Promotion and the Contextual Politics of Peace in Sri Lanka," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* vol. 99, no. 5 (2009).

[24] Jeffrey Z. Rubin, Dean Pruitt, S.H. Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*, 2nd ed. (New York McGraw-Hill, 1994). Quoted in Zartman, 1997, o*p. cit.* For related analysis on specific approaches to conflict termination see: on "strategic coping" Christopher Tuck, *Confrontation, Strategy and War Termination: Britain's Conflict with Indonesia* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013). On

them.[25] This thesis argues that these approaches have weaknesses that justify discarding them as explanatory tools for the case study, particularly that the delineation of the strategies imply that they are pursued separately from each other, and the impact of multiple simultaneous strategies on each other, or on the negotiating process, is poorly defined. These points are troublesome for those conflicts – as appeared to be the case in Sangin – where negotiations take place while other conflict strategies continue in parallel, or where multiple conflict strategies interact to bring about desired negotiations. These, and other concerns, contributed to the rise in theory considering conflict termination to be less about the competent application of rational scientific methods, and rooted instead in influencing subjective psychological responses to drivers of conflict – some of which are specifically local, cultural or historical – within unpredictable, dynamic hostilities.[26]

The psychology around the value actors place on a negotiated end to conflict is an important factor. Research by the Rand Corporation describes a negotiated agreement as a "Mixed Outcome" – it is unclear whether this is considered positive.[27] This line of thinking risks placing negotiation in opposition to outcomes that are more directly the product of the successful application of military force; it is implicit that (military) domination, and other more recognisable indicators of victory, have failed if a negotiated outcome is prioritised. An increased focus on psychology and subjectivity extends the more objective, rational approaches beyond assessments of what military commanders will do with their resources (generally personnel and materiel) in response to their opponent's military strategy. It also allows non-military motivations to play an increased role in conflict termination methodologies, such as the desire for

[25] Whether a conflict is interstate, a civil war, an insurgency, or fits some other categorisation, can be considered an important variable in theories of conflict termination. For examples, see P. Terrence Hopmann, *The Negotiation Process and the Resolution of International Conflicts* (University of South Carolina Press, 1996); Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit*; Donald Rothchild and Caroline Hartzell, "Interstate and Intrastate Negotiations in Angola," in *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars.* , ed. I. William Zartman, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 1995); T. David Mason and Patrick J. Fett, "How Civil Wars End a Rational Choice Approach," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 40, no. 4 (1996).

[26] On the dynamism of conflict see Karen A. Jehn and Elizabeth A. Mannix, "The Dynamic Nature of Conflict: A Longitudinal Study of Intragroup Conflict and Group Performance," *Academy of management journal* vol. 44, no. 2 (2001); Louis Kriesberg, "Nature, Dynamics, and Phases of Intractability," *Grasping the nettle: Analyzing cases of intractable conflict*, (2005). For evolutions to Ripeness theory in response to the dynamic nature of conflict intractability see the series of two articles by Coleman et al., 2008, o*p. cit*; Coleman et al., 2008, o*p. cit.*

[27] See for example Martin C. Libicki and Ben Connable, "How Insurgencies End," (2010). http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG965.html (accessed 3rd July 2012), pp. 14-17, 168-171.

legitimacy, economics (including illicit activity), or the impact of humanitarian aid.[28] Paul Collier's work, notably on greed and grievance, outlines a range of non-military motivations for conflict rooted in the same negative psychology as Ripeness theory, in which it may be economically rational to perpetuate war.[29] This suggests greed is a motivation that needs to be considered as part of explanations for conflict termination, including through negotiation.

Collier highlights an important issue that helps to explain the absence of greed narratives from the primary source material, and therefore from the detailed case study analysis: narratives of grievance play much better with the international community than ones of greed, and so greed is rarely admitted to interlocutors.[30] This is a weakness that could only be mitigated effectively with alternative sources of economic data, not available for north Helmand at this time. Collier's conclusions also highlight the importance of two other factors pertinent to the case study and the approach taken in this thesis, both of which fall outside Ripeness theory. His research "found that geography matters," as conflict risks are increased by population dispersion and possibly by mountainous terrain – both conditions present in Afghanistan.[31] History was also shown to be important, for in areas that "experienced

[28] Economic motivations are covered in Mats Berdal and Achim Wennmann, *Ending Wars, Consolidating Peace: Economic Perspectives* (Routledge, 2013). For the interaction between narcotics actors and state finance and taxation see Berit Bliesemann de Guevara and Florian P. Kühn, "Rents, Taxes, and Perpetual Dependency," *Routledge Handbook of International Statebuilding*, (2013), p. 266. On humanitarian aid, see Willemijn Verkoren and Bertine Kamphuis, "State Building in a Rentier State: How Development Policies Fail to Promote Democracy in Afghanistan," *Development and Change* vol. 44, no. 3 (2013); Jonathan Goodhand, "Aiding Violence or Building Peace? The Role of International Aid in Afghanistan," *Third World Quarterly* vol. 23, no. 5 (2002); Florian P. Kühn, "Aid, Opium, and the State of Rents in Afghanistan: Competition, Cooperation, or Cohabitation?," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* vol. 2, no. 3 (2008); Stuart Gordon, "The United Kingdom's Stabilisation Model and Afghanistan: The Impact on Humanitarian Actors," *Disasters* vol. 34, no. s3 (2010). Specifically on the link between development policy and civil war, see Paul Collier, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (World Bank, 2003).

[29] See Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War " *Oxford Economic Papers* No. 56., (2002). For an assessment of the economic rationality of continuing conflict see Paul Collier, "Doing Well out of War: An Economic Perspective," in *Ending Wars, Consolidating Peace: Economic Perspectives*, ed. Mats Berdal and Achim Wennmann, (Boulder, London: Lynne Reinner, 2000). Grievance as a conflict driver is covered in L.E. Cederman, K.S. Gleditsch, and H. Buhaug, *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). The field is extended in Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman, eds., *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

[30] Collier, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 92.

[31] Collier and Hoeffler, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 35.

a conflict recently the risk of recurrent conflict is high."[32] It is therefore significant that Afghanistan has a long history of turbulent changeovers of power (as shown in Figure 2), and that it had been a near-perpetual conflict since 1979. These are important narratives, expanded further in the case study, with strong antecedents in Afghanistan's history.

The role of international subsidy, and Afghanistan's capacity to be sustained by domestic revenue, is a recurring theme from the 18th Century onwards. This highlights the importance of Rubin and others' work on the rentier state, where the state itself, and its economy, rely disproportionately on external income – at times to the exclusion of promoting domestic productivity.[33] The case study at the centre of this thesis occurs in the post 1991-era but some perceptions, influential on actors negotiating the Sangin Accord, derive from experience and historical memory from 1978 and before. This places the analysis astride the fault line in different approaches taken by international actors towards Afghanistan as a rentier state, described by Barnett Rubin:

> Whereas before 1978 foreign powers competed for influence within the common framework of the Afghan state, through 1991 they pursued their goals by funding antagonistic organisations, of which the state was only the best armed (and the only one capable of printing currency).[34]

The relative weakness of centralised reforms is also important. The historical antecedents to the Sangin Accord recall repeated instances of elites (often sponsored by outsiders) "building an overdeveloped but under-achieving state that shuts itself off from the population."[35] For Gilles Dorronsoro, the international community added fresh impetus to the re-establishment of a centralised political system, but "the drive to reconstruct the state has clashed with the efforts of regional powers to remain

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Distinct from rentier capitalism (where currency is exported), the modern use of the term comes from Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani, *The Rentier State* (Routledge, 2015). The definition is summarised very effectively in Giacomo Luciani, *The Arab State* (Univ of California Press, 1990), pp. 87-88. Implementation challenges in this context are described in Verkoren and Kamphuis, 2013, o*p. cit*; Barnett R. Rubin, "Political Elites in Afghanistan: Rentier State Building, Rentier State Wrecking," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* vol. 24, no. 01 (1992).

[34] Rubin, 1992, o*p. cit.*, p. 98.

[35] de Guevara and Kühn, 2013, o*p. cit.*, p. 226.

autonomous."[36] From this perspective the Sangin Accord case study could be considered a microcosm of this struggle between community desires for security and autonomy. Dorronsoro reviews the history of Afghanistan from 1979 to 2005, considering whether the course of the country's modern history represents continuity with older history, or a marked change from what went before.[37] These themes are useful lens for the historical analysis, and have been applied to elements of the case study. There is therefore a considerable range of theories, models of analysis, and thematic approaches that could be applied to the case study. However, given the centrality of the negotiated agreement itself to the case study, the thesis focuses on the application of negotiation theory and related work on reconciliation theory.

Negotiation theory divides broadly into two schools of thought. "One, of the longest standing, holds that the key to a successful resolution of conflict lies in the ***substance*** of the proposals for a solution" while "the other holds that the key to successful conflict resolution lies in the ***timing*** of efforts for resolution."[38] There is a third smaller school that "focuses on relationships between the parties rather than either the substance or the procedure of the issues in conflict."[39] Reconciliation theory addresses the final line of argument; this body of research holds that some of the core motivators for conflict resolution are contact and communication between the conflict parties; problem-solving workshops and other forms of interactive conflict resolution; or intervention by mediators.[40] Since these activities need not depend on negotiation, or involve it at all, it is considered less useful here. Those that prioritise the substance school argue that, "parties resolve their conflict by finding an acceptable agreement – more or less at a mid-point – between their positions, either along a flat front through compromise or through the search for positive sum solutions or encompassing

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[36] Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (London: Hurst and Company, 2005), p. 338.

[37] For example, in ibid. he describes the continuous nature of the strengthening central state relative to the traditional regional leadership (p. 120), the cyclical nature of state reliance on foreign subsidy (p. 335), while the Taliban's co-option of religious leaders into the state apparatus is considered a new phenomenon (pp. 273-4).

[38] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 225. Emphasis added.

[39] Ibid.

[40] For a review of this line, see Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. 38. For more on reconciliation theory, see for example Yehudith Auerbach, "The Reconciliation Pyramid—a Narrative-Based Framework for Analyzing Identity Conflicts," *Political Psychology* 30, no. 2 (2009); Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory and Practice* (Lexington Books, 2001), especially chapters 2 and 6.

formulas."[41] The substance and relationship schools of negotiation theory therefore align with the separate but related reconciliation theory, in prioritising the social interactions between conflict parties, and the mechanisms that facilitate them. To select one of these approaches would make exploring the interaction between military power and negotiations less direct than allowed by Ripeness theory, and so they have been discarded.

The timing school is dominated by Zartman's Ripeness theory, and offers important critical advantages over reconciliation theory, and over the substance and relationships schools within negotiation theory. A theoretical framework built around Ripeness theory allows coverage of both those main arms of negotiation theory, as Ripeness theory is not intended to be a direct foil to the substance debate, but incorporates key elements of it. Zartman is clear that Ripeness "does not obviate the analysis of substance,"[42] as propositions of worthy substance are a key part of formulating the conditions that Ripeness theory states are pre-requisites for successful negotiation. There are two further strengths. First, the concept of Ripeness remains central in the academic literature on negotiation and conflict resolution, and – importantly – also in public statements about current conflicts, as shown earlier. Secondly, unlike other elements of negotiation theory, Ripeness directly addresses the impact of the armed forces – the most heavily resourced government policy lever – on the negotiating process, incorporating substance, timing, relationships, and military action into one theoretical framework. This more closely mirrors the real-world policy options facing international actors seeking to deploy government resources to bring about political progress through genuine political agreement.

Ripeness has a further useful strength (albeit not unique to Zartman's work), in that the theory – especially later additions to it – allow for many of the wider factors

[41] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 225. Work aligned with the substance debate is discussed later in the thesis, and includes important assessments on the relationship between the terms of agreement and their resilience. See for example Caroline A. Hartzell, "Explaining the Stability of Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 43, no. 1 (1999); K. Derouen, J. Lea, and P. Wallensteen, "The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* vol. 26, no. 4 (2009); M. Hoddie and C. Hartzell, "Civil War Settlements and the Implementation of Military Power-Sharing Arrangements," *Journal of Peace Research* vol. 40, no. 3 (2003); Caroline A. Hartzell, "Settling Civil Wars: Armed Opponents' Fates and the Duration of the Peace," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* vol. 26, no. 4 (2009).

[42] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, pp. 225-6.

discussed above to be factored in to the calculation, providing they can be shown to affect the conditions that determine when genuine negotiations begin. Theoretical distinctions between the type of war, or the military approach used, become secondary to their impact on the mindsets of negotiating parties. The impact of history may also be considered, alongside non-military motivations and actions such as perceptions of outsiders and their actions, the impact of international development spending, and cultural or locally-determined factors such as tribe or perceived legitimacy). Alongside these strengths, Ripeness theory has been selected because of a desire to explore the policy makers' aspirations for international action – especially military power – to generate negotiated agreement. Since this was so central to the stated aims of the later years of the Afghanistan campaign, Ripeness forms the basis of the explanatory method applied to that case study. The Sangin Accord also occurred in an area of the country renowned for intense fighting, offering an opportunity to consider the importance of high levels of violent conflict on negotiation – a core tenet of Zartman's theory.

Former American Defense Secretary Robert Gates described Sangin District, in Helmand Province, as "the most dangerous not only in Afghanistan but maybe the whole world."[43] The United Kingdom (UK) "suffered its heaviest losses in Sangin."[44] On 20th September 2010, as responsibility for Sangin passed from the United Kingdom to the United States (US), the BBC reported that "of the 337 UK deaths [in Afghanistan] since 2001, a third have happened there."[45] As British forces did not deploy to Sangin permanently until 21st June 2006,[46] this number – and the many wounded – testify to the intense combat and complex threat from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) faced by British, American and Afghan National Security Forces, and the civilian government and local population they were there to support. On 4th January 2011, Gulab Mangal, Helmand's Provincial Governor, revealed that his government had negotiated an agreement with the principal local political grouping in Sangin District's

[43] Robert Gates, quoted in Euan MacAskill, "US Claims to Have Driven Taliban out of Sangin," 8th March 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/08/us-afghanistan-sangin-taliban-claim(accessed 4th May 2011).
[44] Quote from Ian Pannell, 20th September 2010. "UK Troops Leave Helmand's Sangin," *BBC News*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11367931 (accessed 10th July 2014).
[45] Ibid.
[46] Patrick Bishop, *3 Para* (London: Harper Press, 2007), p. 107.

rural areas, where the Taliban asserted control.[47] This appears consistent with important changes to the grand strategy. The Afghan Government held a peace *jirga*[48] (a decision-making council) on 4th June 2010,[49] announcing in public that a national reconciliation[50] program was now underway, also offering top-level support for the ongoing reintegration efforts aimed at low-level fighters. Separately, in scholarship, reconciliation theory is distinct from both the ISAF policy of political outreach to the Taliban and different from the process specified in Ripeness theory as it removes the pain caused by military activity as a motivating element, and arguing instead that conflict moves towards resolution because of conciliatory motivations and activities.[51] Complementing the reconciliation policy used in the later phases of the recent Afghan conflict, reintegration referred to both policy and practical activity aimed at the tactical and operational levels to persuade low-level fighters, commanders, and [Taliban] shadow governors to lay down their arms and to assimilate peacefully into Afghan society.[52]

By the time the US took over in Sangin in autumn 2010, it appeared that greater military resources and a national-level policy mechanism for reconciliation had delivered a local political negotiated agreement there. The military and policy changes were significant points, but they do not tell the whole story. Outreach efforts began through the Afghan District Governor (DG)'s office in 2008.[53] Sangin's DG changed to a more respected, educated man on 1st March 2010. The new appointee, Mohammad Sharif Khan, received a written offer of peace on 29th May 2010 (which formed the basis of the 4th January 2011 Sangin Accord), apparently from leaders of the same

[47] The Telegraph, "Afghanistan: Sangin Insurgents Agree to Stand up to Taliban," 4th January 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.UK/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8238031/Afghanistan-Sangin-insurgents-agree-to-stand-up-to-Taliban.html(accessed 27th July 2014).

[48] See the Afghan Glossary for more on *jirgas*.

[49] BBC, "Afghan Peace Jirga Backs Karzai Taliban Talks Proposal," 4th June 2010, http://www.bbc.co.UK/news/10234823(accessed 26th November 2013).

[50] Official documents capitalised the word reconciliation, naming the policy of negotiating with Taliban senior leaders used within the Afghanistan campaign, but lower case is used in this thesis for consistency. See for example NATO, "Backgrounder: ISAF Support to Reintegration and Reconciliation," 2011, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2009_12/20110310_091203-media-backgrounder-support-to-reintegration.pdf(accessed 27th July 2014).

[51] For a brief review of this line see Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. 38 and chapters 4-7 of this thesis.

[52] NATO, 2011, o*p. cit.*, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2009_12/20110310_091203-media-backgrounder-support-to-reintegration.pdf.

[53] Author's personal communication with civilian reconstruction official, 6th November 2012.

political grouping who would also make that later agreement.[54] This offer preceded the peace jirga, the military surge into north Helmand, and the handover from the UK to US forces. Negotiations that led to the Sangin Accord therefore opened and evolved into a proposed agreement at a time when NATO's[55] International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)[56] and Afghan Government national security forces (ANSF)[57] were under considerable pressure in that district and arguably in a stalemate – despite the arrival of US Marine Corps (USMC) units from 2009 onwards, mostly into southern Helmand. However, the agreement was activated publicly in 2011 after the US completed that surge of additional personnel into the country. Most of them "were concentrated overwhelmingly on two volatile areas of southern Afghanistan: Helmand and Kandahar Provinces," with the later formations reaching north Helmand in 2010,[58] bringing ISAF towards a force numbering 100,000.[59] Explaining the role played by military action is most important since – in the early stages at least – it is at best unclear when and how it correlates directly with negotiated agreement, despite the presence of apparently overwhelming force. This suggests that the Sangin case study could highlight areas where, alongside wider research, it may inform new thinking on counterinsurgency.

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[54] Phil Weatherill, "Note from the Field: Targeting the Centre of Gravity - Adapting Stabilisation in Sangin," *The RUSI Journal* vol. 156, no. 4 (2011), endnote 24, p. 98. http://www.rusi.org/publications/journal/ref:A4E3684F6260B4

[55] NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization. An international organisation consisting of 28 member countries from Europe and North America, safeguarding the freedom and security of its members through political and military means. See NATO, "What Is NATO?," 2012, http://www.nato.int/welcome/brochure_WhatIsNATO_en.pdf(accessed 22nd April 2012). P. 5.
In this thesis, the term 'International Organisation' means those formal organisations with international reach which have operated, or are operating in Afghanistan. This includes both those constructed from coalitions, such as NATO or the United Nations, and those from a single state.

[56] ISAF: the United Nations-mandated International Security Assistance Force deployed to conduct military "operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population." See ISAF, "Afghanistan International Security Assistance Force: Mission," ISAF, 2014, http://www.isaf.nato.int/mission.html(accessed 8th February 2013).

[57] ANSF: Afghan National Security Forces, a NATO term for the combined Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP).

[58] Barak Obama acknowledged the need for more troops as early as 2008, during the election campaign. On this, and related themes see Theo Farrell, *Unwinnable* (Bodley Head, forthcoming), chapter 8. Also Spencer Ackerman, "What Surge? Afghanistan's Most Violent Places Stay Bad, Despite Extra Troops," 2012, http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/08/afghanistan-violence-helmand/.

[59] As of 19th February 2013, ISAF contained 102,052 deployed personnel from 50 countries, including 68,000 from the United States (the largest contributor) and 9,500 from the UK (the second largest contributor), see ISAF, "ISAF-ANA Troops Placemat Dated Feb 19 2013," 2013, http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/stories/File/Placemats/ISAF-ANA%20Troops%20Placemat-Feb19%202013.pdf(accessed 26th July 2014).

British doctrine, developed jointly with the United States, says clearly that security makes progress towards reconciliation and accommodation possible.[60] Yet as will be shown in later chapters, the Sangin Accord came about while the population covered by the Accord were not secure, and without "a strong forward presence among that part of the population which insurgents seek to control" – considered by doctrine and experience to be a "vital step in neutralising insurgents."[61] Nevertheless, in order to have developed the Accord, it must have been possible in some degree "to address the legitimate grievances used to generate popular support for armed resistance" – on the assumption that the negotiations were genuine.[62] The problems of assessing motivation and intent among negotiators are vital to any assessment, and are explored in detail in later chapters, notably chapter seven which attempts to use Ripeness theory to explain the Sangin Accord. The central question highlighted by the case study remains relevant for policy in current and future conflicts, and for theorists: is a stalemate required for genuine negotiations focused on conflict resolution to start, or for one side to be in a clear position of strength?

Why seek a local negotiated agreement?

There are three reasons to question which matters more, stalemate or strength. Firstly, governments continue to seek negotiated agreements during conflicts and as mechanisms to end them. Negotiated agreements are a key policy option for those seeking conflict resolutions, for, as the British Army recognises, military action alone can rarely achieve "the political resolution of the drivers of conflict" required for lasting stability and reconciliation.[63] Successive United Kingdom governments continue to express the importance of securing a negotiated end to disagreements and conflicts around the world. On Iran, and its nuclear activities, the UK's Foreign Secretary said on 13th April 2012 "what we want is a peaceful and negotiated solution."[64] On Israel and

[60] British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 3-19.
[61] Ibid., paragraph 3-22.
[62] Based closely on US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 1-51.
[63] British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 8-6.
[64] UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2012. "Iran Talks: Seeking a Peaceful and Negotiated Solution," *www.fco.gov.uk*, http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=752666682 (accessed 13th April 2013).

the Occupied Territories, the UK felt (in 2011) that "a negotiated end to the occupation is the best way to allow Palestinian aspirations to be met in reality and on the ground."[65] While these public communications can only verify the importance of negotiated agreements to a limited extent, as many of these pronouncements may be pure rhetoric, this is a rhetoric nonetheless that sustains the importance of negotiated agreement within public discourse on foreign policy and defence matters. It is also shared by our closest allies.

The United Kingdom rarely, if ever, operates alone in foreign policy terms. Traditionally, its closest working partners in conflict areas are the United States and also Canada, Australia and New Zealand – the so-called Five Eyes community formed from close working, especially on intelligence matters, during the Second World War.[66] More recently, the European Union (notably Denmark), and some Baltic states, have come to the fore. References to negotiations and political settlements vary in official documents from these sources. The United States' first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), subtitled *Leading Through Civilian Power* was released in 2010. Its stated aim is to provide "a blueprint for elevating American "civilian power" to better advance our national interests and to be a better partner to the US military" specifically by "directing and coordinating the resources of all America's civilian agencies to prevent and resolve conflicts; help countries lift themselves out of poverty into prosperous, stable, and democratic states; and build global coalitions to address global problems."[67] That document makes many implicit and indirect references to negotiated agreements, but refers to them directly only as part of "classic diplomacy," and usually in the context of multi-lateral agreements between states.[68] Yet, recognising the role that negotiations can play in ending dispute abroad,

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[65] UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2011. "Foreign Secretary Updates Parliament on Middle East and North Africa," *www.fco.gov.uk*, http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=PressS&id=689368882 (accessed 9th November 2013).

[66] See for example Privacy International, "The Five Eyes," 2015, https://www.privacyinternational.org/?q=node/51(accessed 10th February 2015). For the core UK-USA Agreement see The National Archives, "Newly Released GCHQ Files: UKUSA Agreement," 2010, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukusa/.

[67] United States Government Department of State, "The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review," 2010, http://www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr/index.htm(accessed 29th August 2012).

[68] United States Government Department of State, "The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review: Leading through Civilian Power," *www.state.gov* (2010). http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153108.pdf, p. 25.

the US State Department also commits to creating "a new cadre of senior diplomats who have advanced training and experience in the area of conflict resolution and mediation and who could be deployed to critical conflict zones and at-risk weak states."[69] A review process began in April 2014, but no updated document has yet been published.[70] Crucially, neither the QDDR nor any other prominent public statements or policy documents make clear the relationship between military power, and achieving negotiated conflict management or conflict resolution objectives. Here, conflict management refers to more immediate timeframes and solutions, and is defined as "the elimination, neutralization, or control of the means of pursuing either the conflict or the crisis" in contrast to the deeper and more sustained approach taken in conflict resolution, defined earlier.[71] The nature of that relationship between military action and negotiation is unclear and disputed. The evidence supports this continuing lack of certainty over the best approach, with "nearly 30 percent of all conflicts that ended in negotiated settlement resuming again within five years," according to the New Zealand Government in a 2009 statement to the United Nations Security Council.[72]

Secondly, governments continue to attempt to use large-scale military deployments to secure negotiated agreements as part of efforts to deliver peace and security, most recently in Afghanistan from 2001, and so it is valuable to assess the impact of their actions on negotiated agreement in that campaign.[73] For centuries, Afghanistan has triggered fear and fascination, and debate among outsiders, over strategies for securing political influence. The British transplanted approaches trialled in Sindh and Baluchistan in the 1870s. Some, such as British Victorian colonial official General William Merewether, thought that the wild landscape created an uncultured

[69] Ibid., p. 136.
[70] US State Department, "Secretary of State John Kerry to Launch the 2014 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)," 2014, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/04/225009.htm(accessed 10th February 2015).
[71] Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit.*, p. 8.
[72] H.E. Jim McLay, 2009. "United Nations Security Council: Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," *www.mfat.govt.nz*, http://mfat.govt.nz/Media-and-publications/Media/MFAT-speeches/2009/0-22-July-2009.php (accessed 22nd July 2011). I have not been able to find a direct reference or the underlying data for this quoted statement.
[73] This thesis uses the end of UK combat operations in 2014 as the end of the campaign, though an evolved military relationship continues: BBC, "UK Ends Afghan Combat Operations," 26th October 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29776544(accessed 16th January 2016).

society controllable only by force.[74] Others like his rival Robert Groves Sandeman recognised the need for foreigners to work with the strength found there, in fertile farmland protected by tribes and families with particular cultural and social characteristics, bound by a fierce loyalty.[75] The NATO campaign of 2001-2014 saw the United Kingdom's armed forces engaged in Afghanistan for the fourth time in the last 200 years, following the First (1838-42), Second (1878-80) and Third (1919) Anglo-Afghan Wars.[76] However, unlike the first three engagements, modern Western-led interventions no longer tend to seek military conquest alone, or permanent direct political rule. Instead, moral, legal and policy imperatives make the "focus on supporting the local populace and Host Nation government."[77] The NATO-led campaign in Afghanistan therefore makes a suitable case study; there was in the later years the intent for military dominance to lead to a negotiated political settlement. It has also been selected because Afghanistan is the most recent long running conflict in which more than 15,000 international military personnel were mandated to act in an active combat role for a sustained period of time – though the peak figure was many times greater. This figure represents roughly a large Army brigade deployment, separating the larger military commitments from smaller scale training and mentoring missions, and other types of small deployment. The active combat role is also important, because – as outlined later in this chapter – Zartman's Ripeness theory features military escalation, and requires military force to provide the coercive pain necessary, alongside a political Way Out, for genuine negotiations to open.[78] This discounts case studies involving peace-keeping missions with mandates limiting active military operations with conflict parties.

It is widely accepted that most protagonists fight for a political purpose. In conventional war, earlier thinking held that politics as an instrument of that war

[74] These debates and distinctions are outlined in chapter 2. General William Merewether was initially British Resident at Aden (1863 to 1867) and Commissioner in Sind, 1867 to 1877.

[75] Robert Groves Sandeman held a number of colonial administrative positions, largely in Baluchistan and latterly modern day Afghanistan, between 1866 and his death in 1892.

[76] Chapter 2 outlines these events in more detail.

[77] US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 2-2.

[78] While the active combat role has ended before publication of this thesis, it was very much in effect during the dates bounding the case study.

emerges when the military achieves its objectives and the fighting ends.[79] This evolves when addressing an insurgency, since the military objective is in fact simultaneously a political one: "the battle for the population."[80] The term insurgency refers to an organised movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict; participants in an insurgency are called insurgents.[81] The military response, known as counterinsurgency (also COIN) includes "those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency."[82] This is illustrated by the oft-quoted maxim that counterinsurgency "is 20 percent military action and 80 percent political,"[83] first advanced in Maoist China.[84] The implications are profound, since "once we acknowledge that the people's political views matter to our own definition of success or failure, an exclusively military definition of success or failure relative to the enemy in battle is insufficient."[85] For example, the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office Business Plan 2012-15 lists one of the top objectives for that government as supporting "international efforts towards agreeing long term commitments to Afghanistan, and Afghan efforts towards an inclusive political Settlement [sic]."[86] The document does not define "political Settlement" nor specify whether it is to be negotiated (or, for example, imposed), yet it is implicit that the international military, development, and diplomatic action impact on the political objectives underpinning this strategy. Here, the three terms refer to the actions of the government departments of state responsible for Defence, Development Aid, and Diplomacy – in the UK, the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Department for International Development (DfID), and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

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[79] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006), pp. 4-5.

[80] Ibid.

[81] US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, p. 385.

[82] Ibid., p. 383.

[83] Galula, 2006, o*p. cit.*, p. 63. For an excellent overview of counterinsurgency and evolutions to the theory and conduct over time, see Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Osprey Publishing, 2008).

[84] General Ting-Chen Chang quoted in US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 1-123.

[85] Emile Simpson, *War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics* (London: Hurst and Company, 2012), p. 23.

[86] UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2012. "Business Plan 2012-2015," *www.fco.gov.uk*, http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/publications/annual-reports/business-plan-12 (accessed 16th May 2012).

This definition aligns with UK and NATO policymakers' intention for the actions of individual government departments to contribute together as a "Comprehensive Approach" where strategy and action synchronises a campaign of military, development, and diplomatic practitioners' chosen policies and behaviours aligned towards a common aim.[87]

In 1965, Bernard Fall concluded that a government losing to an insurgency isn't being outfought its being out-administered, out-governed.[88] Thus, a weakness in governance – perhaps caused by deficient legitimacy relative to opponents or other standards – becomes a factor in the success of the military campaign. American military doctrine in place during the later stages of the Afghan campaign states that the mission "cannot achieve lasting success without the HN [Host Nation] government achieving legitimacy."[89] The Host Nation is one "that receives the forces and/or supplies of allied nations, coalition partners, and/or NATO organizations to be located on, to operate in, or to transit through its territory."[90] Legitimacy is a more complicated concept, being a subjective characteristic referring to the level of acceptance afforded to an individual, group, or structure by its constituents or other assessors – relative to rivals or alternatives. This thesis follows Thomas Ohlson's categorisations. "Vertical legitimacy is about responsible authority and voluntary subordination, horizontal legitimacy is about mutual acceptance and tolerance at elite and mass levels."[91] For theory to be truly useful therefore, it must account for the relationship between government levers (like military power, diplomacy, development, and stabilisation activity) and the legitimacy – and capacity – of the supported government to bring about a political settlement with its opponents. This

[87] On the Comprehensive Approach, see for example NATO, "A ''Comprehensive Approach'' to Crises," 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51633.htm(accessed 10th February 2015). ; UK House of Commons Defence Committee, *The Comprehensive Approach: The Point of War Is Not Just to Win but to Make a Better Peace* (London: The Stationary Office Limited, 2010). Also Wilton Park, "Conference WP1092: Operationalising the Comprehensive Approach," 2012, https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/conference/wp1092/(accessed 10th February 2015).

[88] After Bernard Fall, "The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," *Naval War College Review*, (1965), p. 55.

[89] US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 1-120.

[90] Ibid., p. 384.

[91] Thomas Ohlson, "Understanding Causes of War and Peace," *European Journal of International Relations* vol. 14, no. 1 (2008), p. 137.

thesis considers the ability of Ripeness theory to do this as part of explaining what happened in one particular local negotiated agreement – the Sangin Accord of 2011.

The status of dialogue involving the Taliban senior leadership has evolved over time, though there has been no public announcement of a negotiated agreement ending the conflict. In 2010, a source close to alleged talks between the Taliban and President Karzai's government indicated they were "very, very serious about finding a way out"[92] and that "Taliban representatives are fully authorised to speak for the Quetta Shura and its leader, Mohammad Omar."[93] National-level progress remained elusive, and the process was further complicated by the announcement of Mullah Omar's death in 2015.[94] Without publicly acknowledged developments at senior levels it is unsurprising that there have only been a small number of negotiated agreements in Afghanistan publicised during the 2001-14 conflict, and these are local in scope. Perhaps the most prominent is the Musa Qala Accord of September 2006.[95] Michael Semple's account illuminates the complexity of strengthening central government by co-opting local governance structures, such as tribal *jirgas*. Local (Afghan) sponsors are often "expected to use their influence to advocate compliance" which requires them to "deliver tangible benefits in the district center [sic] to acquire and use some power of patronage."[96] For some this same local patronage is considered corruption.[97] For all these reasons, within the most recent campaign in Afghanistan the Accord struck in

[92] Karen DeYoung, "U.S Attempts to Restart Peace Talks with the Taliban," The Washington Post, 3rd February 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-02-03/world/36728713_1_taliban-negotiators-taliban-office-taliban-leaders(accessed 12th May 2014).
[93] Pajhwok Report, "Time Not Ripe for Peace Talks: Pentagon," October 6th 2010, http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2010/10/06/time-not-ripe-peace-talks-pentagon-0.
[94] See for example Theo Farrell and Michael Semple, "Making Peace with the Taliban," *Survival* 57, no. 6 (2015), notably p. 88 onwards; Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Blood and Hope in Afghanistan: A June 2015 Update," Brookings Institute, 26th May 2015, http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2015/05/26-isis-taliban-afghanistan-felbabbrown(accessed 16th January 2016). Also Antonio Giustozzi and Silab Mangal, "The Taliban in Pieces: The Internal Struggle Behind the Announcement of Mullah Omar's Death," Foreign Affairs, 3rd August 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2015-08-03/taliban-pieces(accessed 16th January 2016).
[95] See Semple, 2009, o*p. cit.*, chapter 8.
[96] Ibid., p. 85.
[97] For example, The Asia Foundation, "Occasional Paper No, 15: The Growing Challenge of Corruption in Afghanistan," 2012, https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/FNLcorruptionchapterOccasionalPaperJuly30.pdf.

Sangin District is therefore rare and worthy of further analysis – not least as it appears to have held for at least 6 months and perhaps a year or longer.[98]

Figure 6: The Sangin Valley, looking northwards, date unknown. The Kajaki Road (Route 611) is visible to the right. The population lived mostly in the thin, fertile strip between the road and the Helmand River. The western tip of the larger, prominent range of hills marks the northernmost point of the District, and the site of the important shrine at Garm Ab. Photo: © Crown copyright.

Thirdly, despite the huge scale of the NATO deployment to Afghanistan, and efforts to centralise government, local factors – for good or ill – remained strong motivators for conflict, and this introduces a new level of analysis for those seeking to use historical case studies to illustrate the relative value of theory as an explanatory tool. Why does the local level of analysis matter? Here, "local" follows the definition given by Séverine Autesserre meaning "subprovincial," and refers "to district- or village-specific issues."[99] (The term 'Local' does not refer to national-level characteristics of the country, and should not be considered as the opposite of 'international'). For the military, the term local correlates with the tactical level, "at which engagements are fought and direct contact is made with an enemy or

[98] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 11121/11, "*Afghanistan/Helmand: Sangin Peace Accord Six Months On*," 20th June 2011. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-19. See Annex A. Also Primary Source PS-1, between 30-39 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Noorzai tribe. Local to Sangin? Not Local. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-1.

[99] Autesserre, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 43.

opponent."[100] This makes the tactical level likely to encompass the smaller and more locally-focused military deployments that affect the local politics and negotiation pertinent to this case study. The decisions taken, usually by young officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and soldiers under their command, affect perceptions of a conflict profoundly. Their actions, and reactions, can have local, but also very far-reaching social, political, and military consequences in the eyes of the enemy, the local population, allies and for our domestic and international audiences. Just as the tactical level determines some higher-level military decisions, local considerations also affect wider political and social dynamics.

Categorising conflicts within state borders is complicated. Perhaps the most useful definition is Internal Armed Conflict (IAC) – a more general term than 'civil war' or 'ethnic conflict' but better suited to the most complex cases. The term IAC describes conflicts that are predominantly intrastate in focus, but recognizes the "international, regional and cross-border dimensions of IACs."[101] Nevertheless, other terms are common, but the theoretical gap remains important: researchers have applied negotiation theory to intrastate and civil wars (in which both refer to the struggle for control of the state fought within its borders), but never at the local level. A civil war "suddenly splits a nation into two or more groups which find themselves in control of part of both the territory and the existing armed forces" and violence ensues.[102] Importantly, under this definition, a nation's current enlisted armed forces would need to split in two and be in conflict with each other to constitute a civil war. Were they fighting as one organisation against other combatants, this would imply an insurgency.[103] Caroline Hartzell considers "the stability of negotiated settlements in intrastate wars," though the term intrastate is not defined other than to imply it is contained with a state's borders.[104] She concluded that "negotiated settlements that

[100] UK Ministry of Defence, "Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01 British Defence Doctrine," (2011). https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/33697/20111130jdp001_bdd_Ed4.pdf (accessed 12th September 2014), p. 2-9.

[101] Theo Farrell and Olivier Schmitt, *The Causes, Character and Conduct of Armed Conflict, and the Effect on Civilian Populations, 1990-2010* (Geneva: United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2012), p. 2.

[102] Galula, 2006, o*p. cit.*, p. 3.

[103] For more, see for example Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.16-20. Nicholas Sambanis, "What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 6 (2004), p. 829.

[104] Hartzell, 1999, o*p. cit.*, pp. 3-22.

are most extensively institutionalized – that is, that provide institutional guarantees for the security threats antagonists face as they move towards a situation of centralized state power – are the ones most likely to prove stable."[105] Derouen, Lea, and Wallensteen analyse the duration of civil war peace agreements, and test 140 agreements for their durability in relation to the provisions included within the terms of the negotiated outcome.[106] Hartzell has shown that while "destroying opposing groups' organizations has little effect on the duration of the peace, an agreement among rivals to share power can help prolong the peace."[107] The Sangin Accord case study adds new data for future studies exploring whether their conclusions also apply at the local level.

There are two more reasons to analyse the relationship between military action and political objectives at the local level, though always alongside higher-level strategy and planning. These are important research priorities, since as Autesserre notes, "local agendas – at the level of the individual, the family, the clan, the municipality, the community, the district or the ethnic group – at least partly drive the continuation of violence."[108] This is especially likely where centralised governance structures are weak or disputed, since engagement with apparently key leaders at the top or centre of the society does not necessarily ensure local issues are addressed. First, engagement with central authorities in weakened states provides a poor route for addressing local conflict drivers. Intervening forces typically organise for top-down, centralised political engagement. Political deals with well-placed, accessible power brokers can offer a degree of centralisation and coordination without extensive military action. However, where the coercive impact of force is required (or perceived as important) the military remains the most heavily resourced arm of national policy.[109] Many interventions now occur in areas where central authority and political

[105] Ibid., p. 3.
[106] Derouen et al., 2009, o*p. cit.*, pp. 367-387.
[107] Hartzell, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 347.
[108] Autesserre, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 6.
[109] See for example the United Kingdom's 2011-12 budget, in which in general terms, Defence received £37.3Bn, the Foreign Office £2.2Bn and International Development £7.Bn.
Simon Rogers and Garry Blight, "Public Spending by UK Government Department 2011-12: An Interactive Guide," The Guardian, 4th December 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2012/dec/04/public-spending-uk-2011-12-interactive(accessed 1st February 2013).

mechanisms are disputed, and traditional categorisation (between say civil war and insurgency) is imperfect. This makes the definition of the parties to a dispute extremely challenging. Here the term "party" (sometimes conflict party) refers to "a person or group involved in an enterprise; a participant or an accessory"[110] – in this case, to a conflict. The nature and boundaries of a conflict party are subjective and not defined in theoretical research, and so the term is clarified further where appropriate.

Second, resource or policy constraints can diminish the impact of a theatre-wide military advantage on local dynamics. The total number of armed personnel available to one conflict party may far outweigh the other. However, decisions or constraints over where to deploy them, or the logistical challenge in massing forces decisively in the right place at the right time, mean that the overall advantage is not always held simultaneously in all local scenarios. In such situations, political progress is still important, and must be delivered in other ways – or parties must act to ensure a national-level reconciliation program has local reach and influence. For example, Afghanistan is dominated by rural areas with low population density. Capacity for brigade and division-level operations, the principal methods for NATO to mass military force at levels far exceeding the Taliban's strength in the same area, was finite – typically one or two per year in each priority province, focusing on one or two districts.[111] This means that the vast majority of Afghan or international military leaders responsible for Afghanistan's districts – some 400 of them – faced the same challenge present in Sangin between 2006 and autumn 2010: how to help Afghan civilian officials generate and sustain political progress without first requiring a temporary, heavily resourced NATO surge of military effort.

Since under the military doctrine driving the Afghan campaign at that time improving the situation for the population was "the reason we are going in," it follows that areas of low population density were more likely to be allocated low military force

[110] The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, "Search Term: Party," Farlex, 2000, http://www.thefreedictionary.com/party(accessed 10th February 2013).

[111] For a structured, chronological overview of each brigade's major actions, see Leigh Neville and Peter Dennis, *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006–14: Task Force Helmand* (Osprey Publishing Limited, 2015). For the impact of these operational choices on organisational learning and evolution, see Theo Farrell and Stuart Gordon, "Coin Machine: The British Military in Afghanistan," *Orbis* vol. 53, no. 4 (2009).

levels.[112] I define these low population locations containing lower military force levels as "fringe areas" – typically removed from centralised authority – in which military resource levels, doctrine, campaign planning or other factors result in no permanent, definitive military dominance, and no imminent prospect of one without a change in either the overall number of military forces available, or to another factor that currently restricts reinforcement. For example, according to US Army doctrine, "twenty counterinsurgents per 1000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density required for effective counter-insurgency operations," though "as with any fixed ratio, such calculations remain very dependent upon the situation."[113] This equates to a ratio of 50:1. Comparing this to an established peacekeeping mission, typically in smaller regions, highlights the scale of the challenge both then and for the future: Kosovo, 48:1; East Timor 86:1; Cambodia 727:1; Rwanda 3,350:1.[114] Here, a population's perception of their own *insecurity* can play a part in generating political progress.[115] As negotiation with local armed actors is always going to be necessary to reach a sustainable end to conflict, it is therefore especially important in these fringe areas to consider whether military dominance is a necessary condition in delivering negotiations.

The principal architect of Ripeness theory, William Zartman, in *Elusive Peace: Negotiating and end to Civil Wars*, looks at "different forms of internal conflict in which attempts have been made to achieve solutions through negotiations, but without complete success."[116] He sees the central question to be whether:

> "Asymmetry [can] be overcome to catch the elusive peace."[117]

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[112] This concept is drawn from (among others) David Galula, who calls this the battle for the population (see Galula, 2006, o*p. cit.*, p. 4.), and variants are used by commanders. See for example Gen. Larry Nicholson, in Dexter Filkins, "Afghan Offensive Is New War Model," 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/13/world/asia/13kabul.html?_r=0(accessed 1st February 2014).
[113] US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 1-67.
[114] Care International, "Care International in Afghanistan Policy Brief January 2003," 2003, http://care.ca/sites/default/files/files/publications/AfghanistanPolicyBrief_Jan03.pdf(accessed 22nd May 2015). ibid.
[115] See ontological insecurity: where the inability to plan ahead due to radically changing policies is so destructive. After Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (University of California Press, 1984), pp. 62-3.
[116] Zartman, 1995, o*p. cit.*, p. 24.
[117] Ibid., p. 25.

This is a critical rejection of the position of strength as a precursor to negotiations for peace.[118] As deployed force levels are lower, when conflict in these fringe areas is analysed locally there is an increased chance that a stalemate is present, even though at higher levels (e.g. nationally) international forces may have a clear position of strength. For some, this local impasse precludes political progress. However, within Ripeness theory, stalemate is one definitive condition for genuine negotiation to begin, alongside a shared perception of a political way out (the theory is defined in detail in the next section). This frames a vital question for chapter seven, in which Ripeness theory's capacity to explain the Sangin Accord is assessed: whether a large intervening military force – such as ISAF in Afghanistan – must always be stalemated for genuine negotiations to begin, particularly in fringe areas where the conditions to activate political progress may be developed without local military dominance. Alternatively, is there support for negotiating from a position of strength, or evolving negotiation theory to conceptualise a stalemate more broadly, where a military advantage might be offset by shortfalls in other factors? Addressing these questions requires a review of William Zartman's Ripeness theory.

Explaining negotiated agreements in theory and doctrine

Military forces remain the most heavily resourced, most numerous and most widely deployable agent through which a government influences conflicts; they are also the biggest factor affecting progress towards a negotiated end. It is therefore vital to review the way theory explains negotiations and negotiated ends to conflict, alongside those espoused in military doctrine, training, and strategy. A combined approach matters, since theory seeks to explain why events occur, allowing a strategy to be developed, while doctrine suggests how to conduct the actions required to make strategy a reality. The UK Ministry of Defence defines strategy as "concerned with the political consequences and advantages of the threat and use of force; it gives meaning

[118] This is expanded in considerable detail in Zartman, 2002, o*p. cit.* This book includes a number of scenarios, exploring the relative power of actors of different sizes, and with different numbers of requirements, engaged in negotiations.

and context to all operational and tactical actions."[119] Whereas the purpose of Defence Doctrine is to set out the fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions, drawing on the lessons of history, on original thinking and on experiences gained from training and operations.[120] Negotiation theory is concerned with identifying the conditions required for successful negotiations: for this body of scholarship, the type of war is less relevant – except where it affects the conditions that theory identifies as necessary to achieve the objective of a negotiated outcome. This suggests negotiation theory is applicable for analyses of many different levels and categories of conflict, such as sub-state scenarios, or coalition or superpower interventions – as long as a negotiated end is the focus of analysis.

Introducing Ripeness theory

The term Ripeness has become connected directly with Zartman, as the theory is so dominant within negotiation theory (for the reasons set out earlier). However, the language of Ripeness was influential before Zartman developed his theory in the 1980s. The terms "Ripe" and "Ripeness" are also used to describe when the conditions described by the theory are present and the time to negotiate is reached, for example "the moment was Ripe" or "analysts perceived a sense of Ripeness." Full theoretical definitions are provided later in this chapter. Ripeness theory, or core Ripeness theory, refers to this theoretical concept defined solely by Zartman, with other related work referred to as 'additions to Ripeness theory' here. This is my collective term for later contributions to the body of theory, principally by psychologists. A unifying feature of these additions to Ripeness theory is that parties to conflict may construct the required conditions incrementally, aggregating the impact of their own different psychologies and motivations, rather than considering them as – as Zartman does – to be binary elements, either absent or present at the same time for the same reasons. Importantly, these writers aim to extend Zartman's theory to include "the successful

[119] UK Ministry of Defence, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 1-5. For an excellent overview of strategy throughout history, see Edward Mead Earle, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert, *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton University Press, 1944).

[120] Closely based on the Chief of the Defence Staff's words, in UK Ministry of Defence, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. iii. For additional doctrine on campaign planning for complex operations, see UK Ministry of Defence, "Campaign Planning: Joint Doctrine Publication 5-00," *www.mod.uk* (2011). http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/56AAAE6B-0728-4D10-A6AB-DBBE30B957B8/0/JDP5002ndEdCh1web.pdf (accessed 11th February 2012).

conclusion of negotiations once opened" (more on these elements later in this section).[121] Zartman's key article on Ripeness quotes John Campbell's conclusion from the 1954 Trieste treaty negotiations, that "Ripeness of time is one of the absolute essences of diplomacy" and Henry Kissinger, who recognised that "stalemate is the most propitious condition for settlement."[122] The formulation and academic significance of Ripeness theory has extended the influence of the associated terms and language (defined in full forthwith): Ripeness; the Ripe Moment; Hurt; the Mutually Hurting Stalemate; the Trusted Spokesman; the Way Out. This perceived link between the timing of negotiations and military action in conflict – and the fact that no definitive alternative has been offered – ensures Ripeness theory remains important and relevant today.

Zartman published *Ripe for resolution: Conflict resolution in Africa* in 1985, introducing "the concept of there being a set of appropriate conditions for the successful launching of peace initiatives in otherwise protracted and intractable conflicts."[123] The theory asserts that the simultaneous perception of these conditions – the Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS) and the Way Out – by all conflict parties is required. As these terms do not have simple definitions, they are analysed in detail later in this section. A second edition followed in 1989, and the theory was further updated in 2000 when Zartman published "Ripeness: The hurting stalemate and beyond," as a chapter within Druckman and Stern's edited volume, *Conflict resolution after the Cold War*.[124] It is important to reiterate a point made right at the start, that Zartman's Ripeness theory is concerned specifically with the conditions that exist at the start of genuine negotiations for conflict resolution:

> "It is difficult at the outset to determine whether negotiations are indeed serious or sincere, and indeed 'true' and 'false' motives may be indistinguishably mixed in the minds of the actors themselves at the beginning. Yet it is the outset which is the subject of the theory."[125]

[121] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 241.
[122] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, p. 8.
[123] Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. v. For the first edition see Zartman, 1985, o*p. cit.* This was updated in a second edition four years later: Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit.*
[124] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*
[125] Ibid., p. 227.

Ripeness leaves unanswered questions about ensuring the success of negotiations, the conclusion of an agreement, or its implementation. It does not therefore address how the psychology and perceptions of the conflict parties evolve away from the negative motivators, held as negotiations open, and move towards collaboration. There are further critiques to this theory, for example, it relies on negative psychology and military escalation. All the same, it serves as a useful start point when designing strategies in military operations for making an agreement and then implementing a plan to ensure it survives (often with new personnel, with new perceptions). As shown previously, there is no prominent alternative, if the focus of research is exploring the relationship between military power and negotiation.

Zartman's initial writing on the theory lacks the clarity of later publications, and specifies that Ripe Moments should be "viewed in relation to escalation of, or critical shifts in, the intensity of a crisis."[126] He goes on to set out three types of crisis, the "consummated crisis,"[127] the "escalating crisis,"[128] and "the grinding crisis."[129] He specifies characteristics of the violence in each, usually involving military forces, but certainly involving open, violent hostility. These distinctions between the different types of escalation are not carried through into later works, and so they remain sideshows for Ripeness theory and are not used as a basis for explaining the Sangin Accord. Zartman then specifies three overlapping ways to recognise Ripe Moments, though the link between them and the specific type of crisis is undefined:

1. "as mutual, painful stalemates, marked by a recent or impending catastrophe" (this is the early definition of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate);[130]

2. "as a time when both parties' efforts at unilateral solutions or "tracks" are blocked and bilateral solutions or "tracks" are conceivable" (this is the early definition of the Way Out);[131]

[126] Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit.*, p. 10.
[127] In which there is a "sudden flare-up of military hostilities followed by a return to the status quo." Ibid., p. 263.
[128] Defined by "a series of successive hostile outbreaks that follow each other closely with increasing intensity." Ibid., p. 264.
[129] Which "begins with a flare-up of hostilities that attracts international attention but does not return to the status quo rather, it moves into stalemate on the basis of a different relationship between the forces in which a new and unstable status quo is created." Ibid., p. 265.
[130] Ibid., p. 10.

3. "as a place on a long slope where the "ins" start to slip and the "outs" start to surge" (this element is dropped from the later theory, as set out below).[132]

In point three Zartman is trying to encapsulate a changing momentum within a stalemated position, though the "ins" and "outs" are not defined and the entire element is dropped as a central requirement from later formulations. The descriptions of the categories of crises, and their more detailed supporting case studies, illustrate the central role that military activity plays in establishing the Mutually Hurting Stalemate component of the core theory. Military action is defined only once in all of Zartman's writings as the mechanism through which conflict parties apply 'Hurt' to each other (the term is used in capitalised form when relating directly to this subjective pain conceptualised by Ripeness theory). Hurt is never defined separately from the MHS, in which it is considered to be:

> "Subjective expressions of pain, impasse, and inability to bear the costs of future escalation, related to objective evidence of stalemate," such as "data on number and nature of casualties and material costs, and/or other such evidence."[133]

Parties apply Hurt intending first to achieve victory, but it also contributes to the motivation to negotiate if this does not work. Analysts must note also that stalemates are possible at other times, but they are not Mutually Hurting Stalemates unless perceived simultaneously by all conflict parties and accompanied by the definitive and fundamentally important (yet hard to define) perceptual indicator:

> A shared "inability to bear the costs of further escalation."[134]

Here escalation is considered to refer to military escalation, but again this is not clearly defined by Zartman, just implied. This is challenged in later additions to Ripeness theory. It is essential to recall that an MHS is one of two necessary components of Ripeness, and must be accompanied by a Way Out for Ripeness, or a Ripe Moment, to exist.

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[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] I. William Zartman, *Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, ed. D. Druckman and P. Stern (National Academy Press: Washington, DC, 2000), pp. 231-2.
[134] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, pp. 231-2.

The Way Out is also subjective and ill-defined, despite being a necessary component of Ripeness theory. This is perhaps made harder due to the less distinct nature of the mechanisms for bringing it about; compared to the military element of the MHS. It remains vital, however, for "without a sense of a Way Out, the push associated with the MHS would leave the parties with nowhere to go."[135] For a Way Out to exist, "parties do not have to be able to identify a specific solution, only a sense that a negotiated solution is possible for the searching and that the other party shares that sense and the willingness to search too."[136] Since "the core of the negotiation process is the transformation of zero-sum attitudes and approaches into positive sum situations and approaches,"[137] one of the main perceptual narratives underpinning the Way Out is "the sense that concessions will be reciprocated, not just banked."[138] (Here, zero-sum refers to a perception that power within relations is finite, and therefore any advantage gained must trigger a compensating reduction for others).[139] These mutually perceived conditions provide the push into genuine negotiations. These theoretical concepts sourced from Zartman's central works (as set out above) constitute core Ripeness theory, or simply Ripeness theory, in this thesis.

The following diagram shows how negotiation, politics, and military action interact to create the components of Ripeness theory – the Mutually Hurting Stalemate and the Way Out – that together constitute a Ripe Moment when genuine negotiations may begin:

[135] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, p. 9.

[136] Ibid.

[137] I. William Zartman and Maureen Berman, *The Practical Negotiator* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 12.

[138] Zartman, 'The Timing of Peace Initiatives', p. 9.

[139] 'Zero-sum' is both a mathematical term and a concept central to certain schools of International Relations and world politics. See for example David A Baldwin, "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends Versus Old Tendencies," *World Politics* 31, no. 2 (1979). Also Yair Caro, "Zero-Sum Problems—a Survey," *Discrete Mathematics* 152, no. 1 (1996); Philip D Straffin, "Game Theory and Strategy," *Washington DC*, (1993).

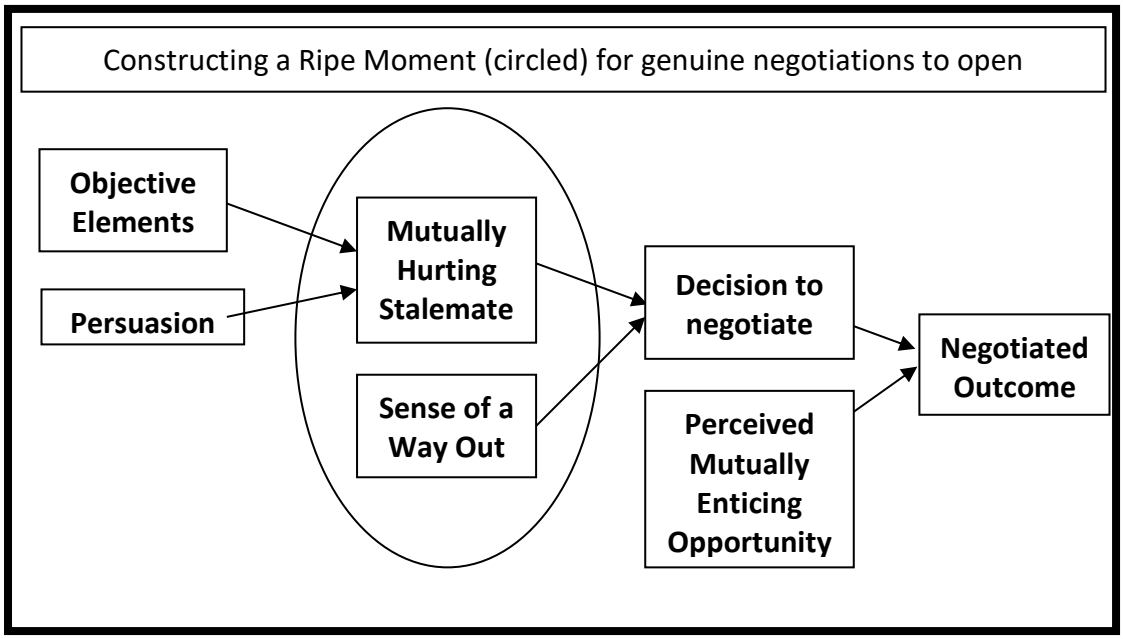

Figure 7: The core elements of Zartman's Ripeness theory linked to later additions.[140]

There are difficulties with the theory and the later additions shown on the diagram. It does not represent the different conflict parties, or any precursors to a Way Out. It implies there is no interaction between the desire and intent for a political Way Out – or the actions that construct it – and perceptions of the factors that establish a MHS (notably the acceptance on all sides that further military escalation is too painful). Nevertheless, the diagram captures Zartman's later formulation that:

> "Negotiations completed under the shadow – or the push – of an MHS alone are likely to be unstable and unlikely to lead to a more enduring settlement. A negative shadow can begin the process but cannot provide for the change of mentalities to reconciliation."[141]

Additions to Ripeness theory by Zartman himself introduce the Mutually Enhancing Opportunity (MEO) to satisfy this need for positive psychological horizons. The MEO – which may exist, or be created – has a decisive impact on the psychologies of the conflict parties, yet the nature of an MEO is not discussed or defined. Perhaps international investment into government services, or other support focused on fostering stability, could provide the Mutually Enhancing Opportunity (MEO) required to catalyse this necessary "change of mentalities," balancing the coercion of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate. Further research is important, in addition to the case

[140] The diagram combines two of Zartman's, presented separately in Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, pp. 230, 242.
[141] Ibid., p. 242.

study that follows, since "when an MEO is not developed in the negotiations, the negotiations remain truncated and unstable, even if a conflict management agreement to suspend violence is reached."[142] These questions are explored in later chapters.

There are also some problems and critiques with the loose terminology employed by Zartman in Ripeness theory. For him the definitive factors are the subjective perceptions of the MHS and the Way Out, not the characteristics of the conflict that bring them about in the minds of the conflict parties. Ripeness is intended to be just as applicable to civil wars as to state-state conflicts. As a result, he frequently interchanges the terms civil war, insurgency, insurgents, rebels, and opposition, as (for him) "ambiguity exists concerning an appropriate name for the parties to a conflict."[143] Though it is clear that Zartman's focus is on "negotiations between government and an opposition that contests the government's legitimate monopoly on violence and uses violent means to press its demands and to contest government authority" his varied terminology may alienate other theorists for whom those categorisations are fundamental to validating the efficacy of any conclusions drawn from the model.[144] This thesis follows Zartman in focusing on the negotiated agreement at the heart of the case study. I have therefore considered history, the characteristics of conflict, and the option of other modes of conflict termination, only in terms of how they affect the MHS and Way Out required by Ripeness theory.

When formulating Ripeness theory, Zartman focused initially on case studies typically from the 1960s-1980s involving state-state conflict and negotiations, no doubt influenced by the policy priorities of the ongoing Cold War (and often in partnership with other writers) – notably, Morocco-Algeria;[145] Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya;[146] Angola-Zaire,[147] and; Namibia-South Africa.[148] This – and the status of related work on psychology and decision making at the time – affected his core concepts in ways that have since drawn critique. For example: 1) Ripeness is based on economically rational cost-benefit assumptions, which does not account for other

[142] Ibid., pp. 242-3.
[143] Zartman, 1995, o*p. cit.*, p. 5.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit.*, pp. 19-81. .
[146] Ibid., pp. 82-133.
[147] Ibid., pp. 134-169.
[148] Ibid., pp. 170-254.

types of decisions (such as social, emotional, and legal decisions) relevant to conflict and peace. 2) Zartman presents Ripeness as a dichotomous state—as Ripe or unripe, and assumes that there is no gradual path to the state of Ripeness. When Ripeness occurs, all conflict parties switch state from unripe, and simultaneously perceive it. 3) It is limited to the individual level of decision (typically concerning the military leader alone), in top-down models of decision-making.[149] There are similar areas of uncertainty within military doctrine, adding to the challenge of using theory for explanatory purposes, and for practitioners applying scholarly research to evolving active scenarios in near-real time.

Negotiated agreements in military doctrine

Many types of war and approaches to warfare exist, and most major militaries are careful not to optimise doctrine and training permanently for any one strategy or conflict type. In addition, the tenets put forward in doctrine are disputed within the military and more widely. Debate focuses on the relative balance between hard combat power and its application, with more socially focused military approaches.[150] It is a debate with long historical roots, as set out later chapters. While British Defence Doctrine describes the point when momentum towards the key objective is achieved as the "Campaign Fulcrum," there is no clear statement on the relationship between military action and achieving and consolidating this fulcrum when the objective is a negotiated end to conflict.[151] While it is accepted that a negotiated end to conflict can be a stated aim, (as revisited in later chapters) policy aspiration anticipates that

[149] Coleman et al., 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

[150] The more nuanced approaches are discussed in the case study later, and are epitomised by the most recent doctrine on Counterinsurgency: US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.* See also chapter 2 in David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Hurst and Company, 2009).
Supporters of more traditional combat power include Bing West and Gian Gentile. See for example Bing West, *The Wrong War: Grit, Strategy, and the Way out of Afghanistan* (Random House Incorporated, 2012). Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq* (Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2009). Also Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency* (The New Press,, 2013). Gian Gentile, "The Selective Use of History in the Development of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine," *Army History* 72, (2009).

[151] UK Ministry of Defence, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 2-20.
Participant observation by the author in Helmand Province between August 2009 and April 2010 confirms that elements within the Afghanistan campaign planning staffs informally adopted Malcolm Gladwell's description, the "tipping point," as a label for the moment when activity across stabilisation strands yields significant political progress. Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (New York: Little, Brown, 2000).

negotiations should open from a position of strength.[152] Doctrine cannot therefore offer any universal methodology through which military force supports negotiations, nor upon the optimum way to apply military force to help secure a political agreement.

The importance of politics in counterinsurgency theory has been translated into practical guidance for the US and UK militaries and published as doctrine in the US Army and Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency (2007)[153] and the British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10: Countering Insurgency (2009).[154] Personnel from the US and UK were on the writing team for both documents, and so the core message for both nations' armed forces is consistent: political purpose has primacy.[155] The US Army manual makes clear that the "long-term objective for both sides remains acceptance by the people of the legitimacy of one side's claim to political power."[156] Many conventional military tasks support this objective. However, the additional need to foster the legitimacy of another government (or, in some cases, a different or less formal governance mechanism), alters the relationship between military and other actors' activities and political objectives. Conceptualisation of the Afghanistan campaign as a counterinsurgency in which military action leads to an explicitly political end enhances the validity of the case study selection and use of Ripeness theory as an explanatory tool.

For the armed forces deployed to the NATO campaign in Afghanistan, and to the local area covered by the case study, doctrine directed that "long-term success in COIN [counterinsurgency] depends on the people taking charge of their own affairs and consenting to the government's rule. Achieving this condition requires the government to eliminate as many causes of the insurgency as feasible,"[157] many of which are social or political. However, there is no overt recognition that these political elements need involve or end with negotiation, and – if they do – the doctrinal

[152] For example, a Pentagon spokesman was reported as saying in 2010 that "reconciliation can only be achieved from a position of strength, when the enemy is on the run." Pajhwok Report, October 6th 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2010/10/06/time-not-ripe-peace-talks-pentagon-0.
[153] US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*
[154] British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*
[155] This point was confirmed at Oxford University's Changing Character of War program seminar on 26th May 2011 under the Chatham House Rule.
[156] US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 1-7.
[157] Ibid., paragraph 1-4.

language appears based on achieving advantage and then opening negotiations from a position of strength. Thus British Army doctrine notes "[o]nce the population is secure the political and development processes can resume and progress towards reconciliation and accommodation is possible."[158] It would seem appropriate to conclude that the term 'accommodation' in this context refers to a negotiated agreement. This doctrine therefore leads the military towards the provision of security, apparently founded on a military advantage, to set the conditions for negotiated political agreement – if one is sought.

However, if Zartman's conception of negotiation theory is correct, a military stalemate is actually the foundation for the type of sustainable agreement upon which the reconciliation and accommodation envisaged by British doctrine rest. This presents an irrational impasse, with huge implications for the tactics and level of kinetic force chosen by military commanders seeking to bring about what Zartman calls "serious" or "sincere" negotiations.[159] How, and why, would commanders seek the stalemate required by Ripeness theory? This is all the more unlikely given the overwhelming technological advantage enjoyed by NATO in Afghanistan. Such an approach also risks immense damage to the reputation and future deterrent value of the organisation itself, and the Allied troop-contributing nations (especially the American superpower), if commanders aimed for stalemate when directed to achieve a negotiated outcome. This is the very heart of the challenge for those attempting to apply Ripeness theory to live operational scenarios.

Despite these theoretical and doctrinal drawbacks, the language of Ripeness peppers commentary about the relationship between the military campaign and political progress in Afghanistan. In 2010, the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee discussed Zartman's concepts, considering whether "negotiations are more likely when you have a stalemate."[160] It was considered time for "that first step towards negotiation trying to build trust between the parties,"[161] although "both sides

[158] British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 3-19.
[159] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, p. 9.
[160] UK Parliament, *Corrected Transcript of Oral Evidence to the United Kingdom House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee Hc 514-I: The UK's Foreign Policy Towards Afghanistan and Pakistan* (London: The Stationary Office Limited, 2010), p. 216.
[161] Ibid.

believe that they can reach a position of greater strength or victory."[162] (These anticipated advantages would indicate the moment was not Ripe for negotiation according to Zartman's theory; these mutual aspirations for a future unilateral military victory demonstrate the absence of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate). This also exposes the potential for differences in perception between field commanders and domestic politicians, meaning that a Ripe Moment might exist, but depend on which leaders' opinions were analysed. Nevertheless, that Ripeness is referenced in elected debate suggests that Zartman's hypothesis has not been categorically disproven or conclusively overtaken by another theory explaining when and why genuine negotiation towards sustainable political agreement begins in the minds of politicians, their advisors, and critics. The concepts of the Mutually Hurting Stalemate, the Way Out, and other additions therefore remain important frameworks for understanding when genuine negotiation towards sustainable political agreement begins.

Identifying and collecting data on indicators of Ripeness

For Ripeness theory to be applied as explanatory tool, it is necessary to set out the data – both objective and subjective – that correlates with the key elements of the theory, notably the Mutually Hurting Stalemate, and the Way Out. The theory is clear that these two elements are each "necessary, but not sufficient" in their own right, only constituting a Ripe Moment when perceived simultaneously by conflict parties.[163] Some important other contributions either suggest changes to the way these core elements are described, or offer additions to the list of correlates asserted to be necessary, or related but not essential. To explain this further, I shall extend Figure 7, annotated to show the key components of a Ripe Moment and the negotiating process that may follow, labelled R1-R8 in Figure 8, below (where "R" is descriptive only, and refers to Ripeness). Core Ripeness theory's requirements are outlined with solid lines, while optional elements of the theory, or additions to the theory, are shown with dotted lines.

[162] Ibid.
[163] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 227.

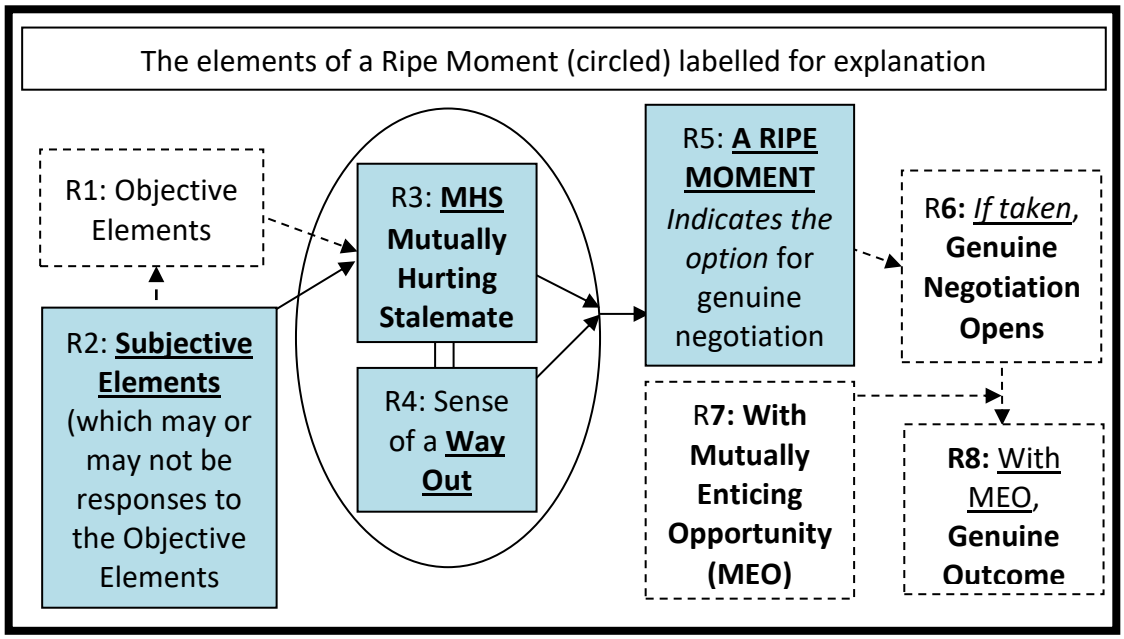

Figure 8: The key elements of a Ripe Moment (circled) labelled for explanation.[164]

The concepts in this diagram are analysed in the case study and conclusions, to explore the significance and construction of each element and their interactions and relationships in detail. Each element from R1-R8 is explained below, showing the specific characteristics assigned to it within Ripeness theory, and its additions.

R1: Objective elements of the Mutually Hurting Stalemate

Zartman only refers to "data on numbers and nature of casualties and material costs" as objective evidence, but (as shown in the earlier indented quote) accepts that other evidence may exist – there is therefore no definitive list of data categories.[165] Other research focused on the Nagorno-Karabkh conflict (1990-95) correlates negotiation with a sudden rise in casualties.[166] Pruitt asserts that objective evidence "be defined as circumstances under which a well-informed, dispassionate, and rational decision maker would conclude that negotiation is appropriate."[167] This leaves the analyst free to update the categories to be considered objective evidence of Hurt,

[164] The diagram is an extended representation based on a combination of two of Zartman's, presented separately in ibid., pp. 230, 242.

[165] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*

[166] See for example Moorad Moorodian and Daniel Druckman, "Hurting Stalemate or Mediation? The Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, 1990-95," *Journal of Peace Research* vol. 36, no. 6 (1999), especially pp. 724-726.
They conceptualised Ripeness as number of casualties in the Nagorno-Karabakh War between Armenia and Azerbaijan, showing that a sudden dramatic rise in casualties was followed by successful cease-fire negotiations.

[167] Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. 2.

accounting for the nature of conflict in each case study. These objective elements are not a required element of Ripeness theory, since it is possible for conflict parties to perceive themselves as in a MHS without any objective evidence at all.[168] In Ripeness theory though, this could represent an irrational subjective response. And as will be shown, additions to the theory suggest a wider definition of objective evidence to include non-military factors. Cultural differences of perception over the severity of evidence of Hurt also challenge a universal definition to rationality. Finally, because of the tendency to associate intense military action, Hurt, and Ripeness, it is important to stress that, "nothing in the definition of an MHS requires it to take place at the height of the conflict or at a high level of violence."[169] Analysts must therefore also be watchful for Ripe Moments at points of low intensity in conflict.

R2: Subjective elements of the Mutually Hurting Stalemate

This is a required element of Ripeness theory since "Ripeness is necessarily a perceptual event."[170] For the analyst, accurate, regularly validated insight into the mindset of conflict parties is therefore a key technique for applying the theory as an explanatory tool. Implicit in Zartman's conceptualization is the definition of conflict parties as single entities reflecting and responding completely to a single individual. "The theory is almost entirely focused on leader decision making," so there is little requirement to account for the varied polities of individual mindsets, or the perceptions of subordinates – this also risks discounting the impact of perceptions held by the civilian population an intervening force aims to support.[171] Criticisms and responses to this point are set out in later chapters.

R3: A Mutually Hurting Stalemate

The MHS is a core, required element of Ripeness theory, whether perceived in response to the objective elements (R1), or in their absence. Objective evidence need not be accepted, and indeed may be resisted, downplayed or ignored. "If the parties do not recognize 'clear evidence' (in someone else's view) that they are in an impasse,

[168] Zartman cites the case of South Africa 1990-94 as a striking case of negotiations opened because of an MHS perceived on the basis of an impending catastrophe, not of present casualties. Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 230.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, p. 9.
[171] Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. 22.

a Mutually Hurting Stalemate has not (yet) occurred, and if they do perceive themselves to be in such a situation, no matter how flimsy the 'evidence', the MHS is present."[172] The definitive characteristic of an MHS is the "inability to bear the costs of further escalation," strongly implied but not conclusively defined within the theory as military escalation.[173] An MHS alone is not a sufficient indicator of a negotiating opportunity, since Ripeness requires it to be perceived alongside a Way Out – recognizing these and synchronizing them perfectly is a challenge for practitioners and analysts. In Ripeness theory there is no conceptual capacity for a partial MHS. The MHS has a binary state – either perceived, or not. (This is challenged by additions to Ripeness theory).

R4: A Way Out

A Way Out is a necessary component of Ripeness, and must be perceived by all conflict parties mutually and simultaneously, alongside the Mutually Hurting Stalemate. The Way Out is also subjective: for a Way Out to exist, "parties do not have to be able to identify a specific solution, only a sense that a negotiated solution is possible for the searching and that the other party shares that sense and the willingness to search too."[174] Zartman gives no description of the mechanisms, processes, or techniques that construct a Way Out. It is implicitly acknowledged that it may be helpful if proposed solutions are already in circulation when the MHS arrives since at that point parties "grab on to proposals that have usually been in the air for a long time and that only now appear attractive."[175] Again, there is no capacity in Zartman's original theory for a partial Way Out: it has a binary state – either perceived, or not. (This is challenged by additions to Ripeness theory).

R5: A Ripe Moment

A Ripe Moment is the stated outcome and goal for Zartman's Ripeness theory, and exists when all conflict parties simultaneously perceive both an MHS and a Way Out. Since not all negotiations occur at a Ripe Moment, and are therefore destined for outcomes other than genuine negotiated resolutions, a Ripe Moment requires a

[172] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, p. 9.
[173] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 231.
[174] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, p. 9.
[175] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 225.

modifier such as “serious” or “sincere” because Ripeness alone indicates a sincere search for a joint outcome.[176] A Ripe Moment indicates the point at which genuine negotiations for conflict resolution may be opened. If policy makers or practitioners decide to seize a Ripe Moment, then they move beyond the boundaries of Zartman’s theory and into deal making and implementation. These points are partially addressed by additions to Ripeness theory.

R6: Point at which genuine negotiations open

This is the decision point resulting from Ripeness theory. Note this element, R6, is this beyond the point where Zartman’s original conception ends, as it is not relevant to the theoretical definition of whether the parties open negotiations or not. The theory does not describe this point as a separate event to the Ripe Moment, since there is no provision within the core theory to explain how to ensure negotiations are successful. Zartman and other theorists do comment upon these later stages, but not within the core propositions, as Ripeness theory applies specifically to the characteristics that define only the onset of genuine negotiations. This is one of the major criticisms of the theory. I have added this point to the diagram to connect the core theory to the stages of the negotiating process that follow in real-world scenarios and are important to policymakers. The significance of this and later stages are explored in the case study.

R7: Mutually Enhancing Opportunity (MEO)

Additions to Ripeness theory, notably by Zartman himself, consider the Mutually Enhancing Opportunity (MEO) to be an essential requirement for negotiations to move from opening towards a successful outcome.[177] The MEO – which may exist independently from the conflict parties, or be created by one or more of them – has a decisive impact on the psychologies of the conflict parties. “Negotiations completed under the shadow – or the push – of an MHS alone are likely

[176] Ibid., p. 227.

[177] See for example the section entitled ‘Problems: Compelling Opportunities’ in ibid., pp. 241-3. This requirement for positive options relates to prospect theory, in which “decision making under risk can be viewed as a choice between prospects and gambles,” see Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk," *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society* vol. 47, no. 2 (1979), p. 263; ibid. Prospect theory has experienced the same evolutions as Ripeness, towards cumulative generation of the perceptive elements. See for example Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Advances in Prospect Theory: Cumulative Representation of Uncertainty," *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* vol. 5, no. 4 (1992).

to be unstable and unlikely to lead to a more enduring settlement. A negative shadow can begin the process but cannot provide for the change of mentalities to reconciliation."[178] Despite its apparent importance, the nature of an MEO is not discussed or defined.

R8: Genuine outcome from negotiations

Zartman's implication – based on his descriptions of preceding elements – is that a genuine outcome represents a negotiated reconciliation, rooted in collaborative mindsets and commitments, and perceived mutually as genuine or sincere. As with other elements from R6 onwards, a genuine outcome is beyond scope of Ripeness theory and is considered merely one possible result from negotiations opened at a Ripe Moment. For Zartman, genuine negotiated outcomes must come from a Ripe Moment, but the presence of a Ripe Moment at the start does not ensure a genuine outcome. This requires analysts to monitor mindsets on all sides as the negotiation progresses, as any later move away from a simultaneous MHS and Way Out in the minds of one or more conflict parties is likely to undermine successful outcomes. Renewed belief in escalation is also an indicator that Ripe Moment is passing.

Zartman and other theorists introduce four second-order factors to consider alongside the core elements of Ripeness set out above: the valid or trusted spokesman; the impending (or recent) catastrophe; the shock; and the new leader. Zartman's original theory placed the Valid Spokesman as a further essential element of Ripeness. This was later downgraded to secondary importance and separated from the route to the Ripe Moment. Yet it remains important to explanations of Ripeness within the whole negotiating process, and so it is considered an indicator here. "The presence of strong leadership recognized as representative of each party and that can deliver that party's compliance to the agreement is a necessary (while alone insufficient) condition for productive negotiations to begin, or indeed to end successfully."[179] The leader is central to perceptions (or not) of the MHS and Way Out, since Ripeness is underpinned by cost-benefit analysis, and these risk and opportunity-driven

[178] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 242.

[179] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, pp. 10-11. For more see Lieberfeld, 1999, o*p. cit.*, especially pp. 71-72, pp. 77-78. Also the article expanded as a book in Daniel Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy: Negotiation and Threat Perception in South Africa and Israel/Palestine* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999).

calculations are central to a leader's role. Changes in leadership perceptions, including changes in personnel, are therefore important events because of their possible impact on an organisation's approach towards escalation or negotiation. Zartman also suggests that an MHS is "optimally associated with an impending, past, or recently avoided catastrophe" – though the catastrophe is not a necessary indicator for Ripeness, it is therefore significant and included here.[180]

Two additional theories also relate to leadership perceptions, and are included here because they add context to Ripeness theory's explanatory value in its original format. New Leader theory "suggests that a change in leadership is often needed to pull away from failed policies."[181] Shock theory, states that "there will be a return to rationality when a sudden striking event—a "shock"—jolts the mind and stimulates rethinking."[182] The data and indicators relating to these second order elements, core Ripeness theory, and selected additions that do not challenge the core conceptualization and construction of Ripeness, are summarized in the table below:

[180] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 228.

[181] See Tom Woodhouse and Christopher Mitchell, "Gestures of Conciliation; Factors Contributing to Successful Olive Branches," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 12, no. 1 (2006). Also Stephen S. Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," in *Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, ed. P. Stern and D. Druckman, (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000). For leadership and strategy within organisational theory, Abdulkader H. Sinno, *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), chapter 2 and 3.

[182] Jacob Bercovitch, Paul F. Diehl, and Gary Goertz, "The Management and Termination of Protracted Interstate Conflicts: Conceptual and Empirical Considerations," *Millennium* vol. 26, no. 3 (1997).

Summary of data collection requirements relating to Ripeness theory			
Data Description	Type	Status in Ripeness theory	Related to elements of Ripeness theory
Mutually Hurting Stalemate			
Numbers and nature of casualties and material costs	Objective	Defined	R1: optional for R3 - MHS
'Other evidence' of stalemate or MHS	Objective	Undefined	R1: optional for R3 - MHS
Perception of MHS, with or without objective evidence	Subjective	Defined	R2: essential for R3 – MHS, and therefore also R5 – Ripe Moment
Way Out			
A sense shared with the other party that a negotiated solution is possible and a willingness to search exists	Subjective	Defined	Essential for R4, and therefore also R5 – Ripe Moment
Ripe Moment			
Exists when a Way Out and MHS exist simultaneously. Note: may exist whether or not negotiations begin.	Subjective	Defined	R5: created by the simultaneous existence of R3 and R4
Optional second-order factors			
Proposals in circulation?	Objective	Optional, Defined	Supporting R4: the Way Out, increasing chances of its simultaneity with R3, the MHS.
Trusted spokesman	Subjective	Optional, Defined	Supporting R4: the Way Out, increasing chances of its simultaneity with R3, the MHS.
Catastrophe	Subjective	Optional, Defined	Supporting R3, the MHS.
Shock, a 'sudden striking event'	Subjective	Addition, Defined.	May affect perceptions vital to all elements.
New Leader	Objective	Addition, Defined.	May affect perceptions vital to all elements.

Figure 9: Summary of data collection requirements relating to Ripeness theory.

Additions to Ripeness theory: moving towards incorporating legitimacy

Other more substantial evolutions to Zartman's work are termed "additions to Ripeness theory" in this thesis. These are pertinent given the requirement in military doctrine and the case study to account for the impact of military action upon legitimacy, including of the Host Nation's credibility as a negotiating partner. These additions increase the theory's usefulness for complex military operations in two ways:

1) By allowing each conflict party to aggregate a variety of subjective responses, motivations, and triggers together to create Ripeness incrementally, and for bespoke reasons;

2) By applying Ripeness theory to the context of low-resource, local, military deployments.

The first addition to theory is very significant. Here, scholars add to Zartman's concept of Ripeness, in which conflict parties must reach the same perceptive states (i.e. of the MHS, and the Way Out), at the same time, for the same reason – and both feel the inability to escalate militarily. These theorists introduce a variable model in which differences in legitimacy, and other non-violent, positive concepts and actions (such as quality of governance and public service delivery) – optionally, alongside military actions – may bring about both an MHS and contribute to a Mutually Enticing Opportunity.[183] Pruitt proposes readiness theory, in which "readiness is the extent to which an individual disputant is interested in negotiation."[184] Importantly, while this follows Ripeness theory's requirement for parties to have both motivation to end conflict and optimism about the success of negotiation, readiness and other additions allow more of one variable to substitute (that is, compensate) for less of another.[185] Pruitt explains this in practical language:

> "Readiness theory allows some parties to be motivated mainly by a belief that they cannot win, others mainly by the cost of the conflict, and still others mainly by the risk of a future catastrophe or pressure from a powerful third party.

[183] Daniel Druckman and Justin Green, "Playing Two Games: Internal Negotiations in the Philippines," in *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*, ed. I. William Zartman, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995), pp. 299-231, especially pp. 305-311.
[184] Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. 6.
[185] Ibid., p. 9.

> Such a model fits reality better than Ripeness theory, which requires a uniform hurting stalemate for all cases."[186]

The second addition to Ripeness theory makes it more useful for practitioners in the context of both fringe areas and other scenarios. Here, imbalances in a military position may be offset by financial or reconstruction (dis-)advantages, or legitimacy differences, allowing a stalemate constructed from the aggregate of a range of factors. This is a more accurate representation of the interplay between military, development, and diplomatic strategies. Similarly, the impact of national-level military dominance might be brought towards stalemate by shortening time before withdrawal or domestic political pressures to see quick results. This allows the doctrinal requirement for a military advantage before negotiation to fit within theoretical models based around stalemate.

Such a model also goes further than core Ripeness in addressing the realities of deployments to fringe areas, where political progress is required although central government is weak or disputed and only a small military force is available. This links to the evolving thinking in the United States towards "minimalist stabilization" deployments.[187] The 2012 US Defense Strategic Guidance states that "US forces will be ready to conduct limited counter-insurgency and other stability operations if required, [but] US forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations."[188] This term groups a variety of related proposals under the concept of minimalist stabilization, defined as "small-scale, lowcost operations combining military and civilian activities to influence the political authority structure of a state in or recovering from violent conflict."[189] Critics of smaller military deployments argue that "a light footprint makes the success of an operation more than usually dependent on the political dynamic of local actors. Since the malevolence or collapse of that political dynamic is precisely the reason that power is arrogated to an international presence,

[186] Ibid.
[187] Stephen Watts et al., *The Uses and Limitations of Small-Scale Military Interventions* (RAND, 2012), p. 1.
[188] US Department of Defense quoted in ibid., p. 6.
[189] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

the light footprint is unsustainable as a model for general application."[190] As explored in the case study, additions to Ripeness theory can explain how a smaller military force might foster the motivation to negotiate using the capacity for some population security and carefully targeted coercion (but without full military dominance), when supported by non-military activities designed to improve governance and legitimacy. (These might include dialogue and confidence-building, public service and infrastructure delivery.

The case study also suggests the need to develop Ripeness theory further in two areas; a task made more feasible by the greater flexibility offered by additions to Ripeness theory:

1) In cases that involve multiple conflict parties, especially those where multiple identities are used as hedging strategies;

2) Where improvement to legitimacy is an important outcome desired from the conduct and onset of genuine negotiation.

The first area for development applies to both core Ripeness and additions to it since both Zartman's theory and evolutions, such as readiness theory, share a crucial limitation: they focus "on two-party conflicts despite the increasing prevalence of conflicts involving multiple players."[191] The Sangin case study, developed in due course, involved groups subject to different leadership and control, and different motivations for conflict. This could merit defining them as separate conflict parties. The list of active parties includes: international military forces; Afghan Government forces; Taliban from outside Helmand, or Afghanistan itself; local Taliban; narcotics smugglers; local criminal elements. It could be argued that the groups mentioned above, and the military coalition, were also internally multi-polar. For example, ISAF included different nationalities (the US, UK and others); different levels of command with different priorities (e.g. Battlegroup, National Task Force, and Regional Command); and different leadership arrangements (ISAF, and the separate counter-terrorism Operation Enduring Freedom mission). By extension, it could also be argued

[190] Simon Chesterman, "Transitional Administration, State-Building and the United Nations," in *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Government*, ed. Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur., (New York: United Nations University Press, 2005), p. 344.
[191] Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. 31.

that the presence of civilian reconstruction and diplomatic elements added to this multipolarity. This is especially pertinent once we move beyond the military-focused Ripeness theory and into the additions where non-military activities contribute to feelings of Hurt, or to awareness of a Mutually Enticing Opportunity. The Sangin Accord also represents a multi-polar negotiation (with local and national government, NATO, neighbouring non-government power brokers and the Taliban all involved to a degree). This complexity requires Ripeness theory to be developed if it is to be useful, especially for cases where doctrine and policy aspires for negotiated agreements constructed within states to strengthen the centralised state itself.

The second area for development stems from the focus in case study on fostering local political legitimacy through the Sangin Accord, and other military and non-military activities. It also adds the impact of the Afghan Government, which was supposed to be the ultimate leader of political progress, into the challenges for modelling the conflict parties. A focus on legitimacy brings more detail on a crucial overlap between theory and policy aspiration: the desire for external action to strengthen the bond between central authority and the population, so that host nation government officials become central to the Way Out and – if a sustainable agreement is needed – the Mutually Enticing Opportunity that Ripeness theory suggests. In the longer term, this legitimacy should be a factor in the fate of any supported government after the withdrawal of external military and civilian personnel. Assessing the Way Out in more detail is an important element of the case study, as – in the Sangin case – the construction of this perception appears to have taken over a year; significantly longer than well-resourced military strategies required to change the security dynamics. In particular, this allows an analysis of the important pre-negotiation stages, following the definition provided by Harold H. Saunders, meaning "those parts of the negotiating process which take place before around-the-table negotiation begins."[192] This considers "why parties to a conflict will not negotiate, and what changes in the situation might enable them to do so" and is effectively addressed through two sub-questions also provided by Saunders:

[192] Harold H. Saunders, "We Need a Larger Theory of Negotiation: The Importance of Pre-Negotiating Phases," *Negotiation Journal,* vol. 1, (1985), pp. 249-262.

(1) Can the parties organize themselves to make the decisions necessary for negotiation?

(2) What in their analysis of the situation stands against a decision to negotiate?[193]

In conflict zones where face-to-face meetings are very rare, the pre-negotiation phase, and actions taken within it are critical to influencing parties to perceive the Way Out. These activities may also include other confidence-building projects and mechanisms, and – in conflict where the purpose is to boost the local government – the act of governing more effectively. This highlights the importance of linking Ripeness to the stated objectives of modern counterinsurgency doctrine – the improved legitimacy of the government, in general terms and as a negotiating partner. It is significant that additions to Ripeness theory allow longer-term factors to be accounted for in an MHS and a Way Out, since legitimacy is linked in part to the "cultural, political and historical contexts" which Stern and Druckman argue "affects the parties, their motives, and susceptibility to influence."[194]

Why history?

History is important for any assessment of a contemporary conflict because individual and collective beliefs, and memories about historical events, give subjective context to "objective" facts about past events. This recall is not perfect, sometimes deliberately so; history can for example be remembered, invented, or recovered, and personal bias can affect perceptions of accuracy for conflict parties and researchers alike.[195] In turn, these subjective calibrations affect the type and quality of evidence that is considered convincing, including in the conduct of negotiation. For example, the acts of negotiators or soldiers, dealing with leaders from another conflict party who have been let down by predecessors from the same group in the past, may increase

[193] Ibid., (the pagination is unmarked within the source so the full page range is given).

[194] Paul C. Stern and Daniel Druckman, "Evaluation Interventions in History: The Case of International Conflict Resolution," in *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, ed. Paul C. Stern and Daniel Druckman, (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000), p. 39.

[195] Mark Damen, "USU 1320: History and Civilization; Section 1 - History and What Really Happened," Utah State University, 2015, http://www.usu.edu/markdamen/1320hist&Civ/chapters/01HIST.htm(accessed 21st May 2015). There are also inadvertent failures of recall, see Kim J. Vicente and Adriaan D. De Groot, "The Memory Recall Paradigm: Straightening out the Historical Record," *American Psychologist* 45, no. 2 (1990). Notably recall bias, where desired outcomes affect what is remembered: Karen Raphael, "Recall Bias: A Proposal for Assessment and Control," *International Journal of Epidemiology* vol. 16, no. 2 (1987).

the threshold at which the new generation of representatives is considered legitimate. History helps determine whether conflict that is considered unbearably intense by one party, is perceived similarly, or felt to be less severe than other disputes from within the living memory of participants. For example, previous experience in Iraq, or in war against the Soviets, may alter the perceptual threshold required for an MHS. Trauma is also a factor affecting rational assessment of Hurt, and the cost of escalation.[196] This is covered in later chapters in more detail.

Historical record also calibrates perceptions of legitimacy, for example, memories of a central government's past record of service delivery affects modern thresholds. Here, the experience and historical memory held by different generations is important. For example, in Sangin, individuals around 70 years of age recalled the pre-Soviet liberal lifestyle; 40 year olds had their formative years in the Mujahidin resistance to Communist forces and their reforms; younger people were educated and lived only under Taliban rule. What happened, and how stories passed between generations are judged, affected later approaches to the Sangin Accord – as set out in later chapters. This matters in two ways. Firstly, within an intervention, perceptions of the legitimacy of government and its international backers, in relation to alternatives, influence progress towards the ultimate political objective: sufficient stability (in both security and governance) to allow the transition of all functions from the international presence to the national government alone. Secondly, legitimacy is both the objective for military doctrine in counterinsurgency, and a factor that will be shown to affect perceptions – and therefore the presence – of key components of Ripeness theory. Threatened "state legitimacy matters because it undermines the processes of state-society bargaining that are central to building state capacity."[197] In particular, assessments of legitimacy affect the likelihood that the Way Out, required for collaborative approaches to non-violent solutions, and the Mutually Enticing Opportunity (needed to turn genuine negotiations into a successful agreement) are perceived. Defining legitimacy is therefore necessary.

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[196] Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte, eds., *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[197] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "The State's Legitimacy in Fragile Situations: Unpacking Complexity," OECD Publishing, 2010, http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-state-s-legitimacy-in-fragile-situations_9789264083882-en(accessed 14th February 2015).

Judgements about legitimacy are "based on indicators of a group's structure (its age and constitutional legality), whether its leadership is charismatic or not, endorsements from leaders of other countries, and the group's performance as evaluated in relation to the expectations and standards of other groups."[198] An opponent's assessment of the host nation government as a partner in negotiations may be affected by subjective judgements about legitimacy, especially where policy defines "political progress" to include a form of reconciliation between different conflict parties within a nation. What can Ripeness offer the analyst or practitioner aiming to promote both legitimacy and negotiated reconciliation, monitor progress in real time, or explain past events? Druckman and Green's analysis matrix on the following page provides a useful starting point:[199]

[198] Druckman and Green, 1995, o*p. cit.*, p. 305.
[199] Ibid., p. 307.

Relative Power and Legitimacy conditions under which Insurgents and Regimes would consider entering into negotiations			
Insurgents' relative Legitimacy	Relative Power (insurgents versus regime)		
	Decreasing	Constant	Increasing
Decreasing	1A – Negotiate	2A – Do not negotiate	3A – Do not negotiate
Constant	4A – Do not negotiate	5A – Do not negotiate	6A – Negotiate
Increasing	7A – Do not negotiate	8A – Negotiate	9A – Negotiate
Regime's relative Legitimacy	Relative Power (regime versus insurgents)		
	Increasing	Constant	Decreasing
Increasing	1B – Negotiate	2B – Negotiate	3B – Negotiate
Constant	4B – Negotiate	5B – Negotiate	6B – Negotiate
Decreasing	7B – Do not negotiate	8B – Do not negotiate	9B – Negotiate
Ripe Moments when both sides seek genuine negotiated reconciliation = 1A+1B together, 6A+6B together, 9A+9B together.			

Figure 10: Relative Power and Legitimacy conditions under which Insurgents and Regimes would consider entering into negotiations.

Here, "the particular intersection of relative power and legitimacy defined in cells 6A and 6B (as well as those defined in cells 1A, 1B, 9A, and 9B) is a definition of a Ripe Moment," at which genuine negotiations could begin – if desired by all parties.[200] This offers a set of conditions for analysts to look for in case studies and consider in real-time. What can a negotiated agreement brokered at the local level such as the Sangin Accord tell us about the applicability of theory, developed initially from state-state conflict scenarios? Was there evidence of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate and a Way Out as the negotiations that led to the agreement began, including the inability to escalate the conflict? Did zero-sum attitudes evolve towards shared goals? Were the negotiations focused on genuine conflict resolution, or something else? If comparative differences in legitimacy can be shown to contribute to the Way Out or the Mutually Hurting Stalemate then it may be possible to suggest developments to theory that –

[200] Ibid., p. 311.

reversing Clausewitz's dictum – allow "politics to become the continuation of warfare by other means."[201] These questions are addressed in later chapters. The impact of long-term conflict drivers, geographic, demographic, and historical factors also have a significant influence on events in the case study – and upon political legitimacy – and so this thesis continues in chapter two with a detailed review of the history of Sangin District, Helmand, and Afghanistan itself showing how this affects the Sangin Accord. The later history is then given nuance and context by data from existing and new sources (both primary and secondary) in the case study analysis, as explained below.

Defining the research task and scholarly context

Of all the published works on Sangin, this thesis is unique in placing the local political dynamics at the heart of an academic study analysing the course of the conflict in Sangin District between 2006 and 2011. These dates are designed to bracket international efforts to bring about political progress in Sangin at the local level, and correspond to the arrival of UK forces there in 2006 and the public announcement of the Sangin Accord in January 2011. It presents for the first time an unclassified historical narrative outlining the lineage of the Sangin Accord, describing the ancient historical antecedents and the contemporary conflict dynamics, and assessing their relative impacts – alongside external and foreign influences – on the political situation in north Helmand that led to the negotiated agreement in 2011. The primary value of this research is therefore as a unique contribution to historical knowledge about Sangin and Helmand Province, Afghanistan. While the fate of the Accord in the years that followed is considered, the thesis focuses on the events leading to the onset of negotiations rather than its implementation as this is both the focus of Ripeness theory, and the period covered by the new primary data from Afghan sources.

Alongside augmenting the new historical case study, the thesis makes a second contribution to scholarship. This is methodological – assessing the applicability of Ripeness theory and its evolutions, and developments are suggested addressing why

[201] Former UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband quoted in British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 3-3.

and when parties to an IAC at a local level negotiate an end to the conflict.[202] By considering the local level (as earlier defined), it takes a new approach to the study of negotiated agreements in conflict. This moves beyond negotiated agreements in state-to-state conflict, and later, intrastate or civil wars at the national level: the traditional frames of theoretical analysis used in core Ripeness theory.

This thesis applies a single case study approach to the Sangin Accord. This method is distinct from the historian's case study method because "case study researchers in political science are interested in the theory-based explanation of individual cases for the purposes of generalizing to other cases, while for historians the explanation of individual cases is a primary goal in itself."[203] The analysis begins with the narrative surrounding the political situation in Sangin set out in the historical case study, from the longer-term drivers to the specifics of the period leading up the Sangin Accord in January 2011. The explanatory method will consider whether the available primary and secondary source material correlates with the elements considered critical for genuine negotiations in Ripeness theory, and additions to it – or other explanations. This includes the construction of a Way Out, and the Mutually Hurting Stalemate, using objective quantitative measures (for example on casualty statistics), and subjective assessments of them made by local leaders and higher placed staff.

An alternative method would have been to compare the Sangin Accord with other negotiated agreements, and to ground the historical narrative and the suggested areas for further theoretical within a larger set of case studies. This would have undoubtedly offered greater value if the focus of this research had been to test Ripeness theory, and to prove the basis for further iterations. Negotiated agreements in Northern Ireland, and in Columbia, would have been strong candidates for inclusion with a larger dataset. However, there are a number of drawbacks that meant this

[202] An effective explanation for the value of historical case study research as the basis for theoretical evolution is set out by Georgetown University's Professor Andrew Bennett in Andrew Bennett, "Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages," in *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*, ed. Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), especially pp. 29-30. The use of history for theoretical evolution is covered on pp. 37-38. Also Alexander L George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (MIT Press, 2005). Important contributions from single cases include Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton University Press, 2005).
[203] Bennett, 2004, o*p. cit.*, p. 38.

approach was discarded in favour of the one outlined above. First, covering a number of case studies would prevent the Sangin Accord being outlined in detail, reducing the unique and untold historical narrative to a far shorter outline. Given that there are no other significant scholarly works on the Sangin Accord, this would have undermined the theoretical value of comparing this reduced summary to other cases, which are supported by extensive bodies of research. Second, there are already a number of works applying Ripeness theory – or additions to it – to Northern Ireland[204] and the agreements with FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia),[205] and also to other case studies.[206] Adding these cases to the methodology only allow this thesis to make a unique contribution to scholarship if they have sufficient parallels to create multiple data points in support of conclusions that modifies theory. Variations in combat intensity, local focus, stabilisation spending, and governance mechanisms suggest that these cases may be too divergent to enable effective comparison with the Sangin Accord. The most significant is the presence of international forces. The significant NATO presence in Afghanistan intended to use outsiders to support another national government in its negotiation. In both Northern Ireland and Columbia, the negotiations occurred between central authorities of a state, and those that resist it, with military action coming directly from the state party to the negotiations. This makes the Sangin case markedly different, and so a single case study approach has been chosen.

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[204] Dean G Pruitt, "Readiness Theory and the Northern Ireland Conflict," *American Behavioral Scientist* vol. 50, no. 11 (2007); Eileen Connolly and John Doyle, "Ripe Moments for Exiting Political Violence: An Analysis of the Northern Ireland Case," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* vol. 26, (2015); John Doyle, "Re-Examining the Northern Ireland Conflict," *The politics of conflict: A survey*, (2007); Joseph E. Thompson, "Northern Ireland: How Ripe for Peace?," *World Affairs* vol. 3, (1996). Ripeness is also rejected as significant for those who favour reconciliatory motives and actions – see for example Jonathan Tonge, Peter Shirlow, and James McAuley, "So Why Did the Guns Fall Silent? How Interplay, Not Stalemate, Explains the Northern Ireland Peace Process," *Irish Political Studies* vol. 26, no. 1 (2011).

[205] Colin Walch, "Rethinking Ripeness Theory: Explaining Progress and Failure in Civil War Negotiations in the Philippines and Colombia," *International Negotiation* vol. 21, no. 1 (2016); Aldo Civico, "Eluding Peace?," in *Engaging Extremists: Trade-Offs, Timing, and Diplomacy*, ed. I William Zartman and G.O. Faure, (2011); Nazih Richani, "Third Parties, War Systems' Inertia, and Conflict Termination: The Doomed Peace Process in Colombia, 1998-2002," *Journal of Conflict Studies* vol. 25, no. 2 (2005); Todd Eisenstadt and Daniel García Peña, "Colombia: Negotiations in a Shifting Pattern of Insurgency," in *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*, ed. I. William Zartman, (1995).

[206] See for example Richard N Haass, "Ripeness and the Settlement of International Disputes," *Survival* vol. 30, no. 3 (1988); Dean G Pruitt, "Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks," *International Negotiation* vol. 2, no. 2 (1997); Lieberfeld, 1999, o*p. cit*; Schrodt et al., 2003, o*p. cit.*, http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/papers.dir/Schrodt.etal.ISA03.pdf. ; I William Zartman, "Mediation: Ripeness and Its Challenges in the Middle East," *International Negotiation* vol. 20, no. 3 (2015).

Academic research and writing on the Sangin Accord has been limited, for two reasons. Firstly, it was, and remains, a very dangerous place and not for fit for independent travellers. Aside from Afghan nationals, only people associated with international military forces are likely to spend a significant amount of time there, although some very brave journalists and researchers have made their own visits to north Helmand and the Sangin area. Official data is also tightly controlled, as the campaign continued for most of the research period. The author's Freedom of Information (FOI) request of 8th May 2014 is believed to be the first extensive release of government data on this case study.[207] The UK's Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) was a vital conduit for collecting and disseminating this and other data about Helmand, initially for official use only. Nations approached the PRT construct differently, but for the UK, it was a combined civilian-military, often multinational, organisation with a variety of functions depending on location, personnel, and other factors. Unless stated specifically, (and since there were others across the country), the term refers only to the UK's PRT in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province. The PRT there "supported the Afghan Government in delivering governance and improved development across the province" through the delivery of a single Helmand Plan agreed between the Government of Afghanistan and its international partners. The plan coordinates 9 themes: Governance and Politics; Rule of Law; Counter-Narcotics; Population Engagement; Health; Education; Agriculture; Infrastructure and Private Sector Development."[208]

While many sources mention Sangin in some form, the restrictions upon data collection explained above account for the presence of only 19 known public sources that address Sangin District in any detail. They fall into two categories: sources dealing predominantly with the tactical military experience, usually in a narrative format, and; sources analysing the situation in Sangin, from either a military or wider political and stabilisation perspective. Mike Martin (then of the British Army Counterinsurgency Centre) wrote an unclassified *History of Helmand,* first published in August 2011,

[207] UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Freedom of Information Request Reference 0494-14 Dated 8th May 2014*. This data is analysed in detail in chapters 4-7, alongside Afghan primary sources.
[208] Helmand PRT, "About the Helmand Reconstruction Team," 2012, http://www.helmandprt.com/about-the-prt/(accessed 5th January 2013).

initially for internal use by the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD).[209] Martin subsequently published in 2014 a fuller study, *An Intimate War*, providing a history of the Helmand conflict based primarily on oral history sources.[210] This was a first: there was therefore no scholarly modern history of Helmand available to civilian or military personnel until after the Sangin Accord was already in place. These important themes are again explored in the film *Bitter Lake* (2015).[211]

A further ten sources address the military experience in Sangin as their main priority, combining narrative and analysis in varying degrees. The most widely known in the UK are perhaps *3 Para* by Patrick Bishop, and *Danger Close* by Colonel Stuart Tootal (which tell the story of the initial break-in battle in Helmand in 2006).[212] The US experience (largely after the period covered by this thesis) is described by Ben Anderson in *No Worse Enemy* and *One Million Steps,* by Bing West.[213] *Sangin – a glance through Afghan eyes* by Toby Woodbridge is a short, self-published memoir by a British military officer who served in Sangin in early 2009.[214] This is interesting context and has some relevant specifics about some key personalities, but it remains a tactical military narrative for the most part. An effective chronological overview and overall context is given on a private website produced by retired US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Ed Marek. His lengthy research, entitled '*Afghanistan's hell, the Sangin Valley: Why Sangin?*' is a very useful timeline upon which to frame a more detailed and politically focused narrative. While it appears largely based on access to sources with knowledge of the campaign, or documents from it, the referencing is insufficient to rely upon it here.[215] Mark Moyar, in *The Third Way of COIN: defeating the Taliban in Sangin* (2010) writes a detailed account, largely based on a comparison

[209] Mike Martin, *A Brief History of Helmand* (Warminster: British Army Afghan COIN Centre, 2011).

[210] Mike Martin, *An Intimate War: An Oral History of the Helmand Conflict* (Hurst and Co., 2014), quoted on the dust jacket. Carter Malkasian produced in 2013 an excellent study of one of Helmand's key districts, but this contains just a few – admittedly important – points on Sangin and so is not considered one of the key sources. See Carter Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* (London: Hurst, 2013).

[211] Adam Curtis, "Bitter Lake," (25th January 2015), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRbq63r7rys.

[212] Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.* Colonel Stuart Tootal, *Danger Close* (London: John Murray, 2009).

[213] Ben Anderson, *No Worse Enemy: The inside Story of the Chaotic Struggle for Afghanistan* (Oneworld Publications, 2012). Bing West, *One Million Steps, a Marine Platoon at War* (New York: Random House, 2014).

[214] Toby Woodbridge, "Sangin - a Glance through Afghan Eyes," (Google Books: MY Books, 2011). https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=zjpD8BUMpyUC.

[215] Edward Marek, "Afghanistan's Hell, the Sangin Valley: Why Sangin?," 2010-2014, http://www.talkingproud.us/Military/SanginValley/SanginIntro.html.

between British and US Marine Corps tactics, and advances so-called "leader-centric" counterinsurgency.[216] While he makes some valid conclusions, his desire to compare military tactics without linking military action to the political objectives so central to counterinsurgency diminishes the value. His analysis starts from the premise that "the same social and political conditions" existed throughout the British and US deployments to Sangin between 2006 and 2011, therefore allowing a direct comparison of the tactics used by the various commanders.[217] This assessment is incorrect, as this case study and other more recent sources show, which limits the strength of his argument. He also makes little reference to other variations in the wider campaign – mostly outside the control of local commanders of either nation – that affected operations in Sangin, such as policy or campaign directives from the most senior leadership, fluctuations in Afghan National Security Force numbers, or changes in the personnel and legitimacy within the local Afghan Government. Two books address the military experiences of commanding a company of soldiers responsible for key parts of Sangin District: Major Russell Lewis' *Company Commander* and Major Richard Streatfeild's *Honourable Warriors*.[218] The realities of deployment in Sangin District are covered in two visceral television documentaries, BBC1's *Our War* and BBC2's *The Lion's Final Roar*.[219]

Six sources cover Afghan political or social issues in more detail, or deal with the wider stabilisation and political context. The first is *Making Peace in War: stories from civilians on Helmund's front line,* a collection of accounts published as an e-book in 2014, describing the experiences of civilian reconstruction staff working at District and Provincial level alongside military forces (including in Sangin).[220] The second is a brief but vital mention in Tom Coghlan's chapter 'The Taliban in Helmand: an oral

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[216] Mark Moyar, "The Third Way of Coin: Defeating the Taliban in Sangin," *Small Wars Journal*, (2011).
[217] Ibid., p. 7.
[218] See: Russell Lewis, *Company Commander* (Ebury Publishing, 2012). And: Richard Streatfeild, *Honourable Warriors: Fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2014).
[219] Bruce Goodison, Television broadcast, "The Invisible Enemy," Series 1, Episode 2, in *Our War* (BBC1: 2011), http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b011x1hl. Richard Sanders, Television broadcast, "Afghanistan, the Lion's Last Roar?," Episodes 1-2, (BBC2: 2014), http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04nd3rq.
[220] Iain and Lou Perrotta (eds.) King, "Making Peace in War: Stories from Civilians on Helmund's Front Line," (Amazon.co.uk: Isaac Perrotta-Hays, 2014). http://www.amazon.co.uk/Making-Peace-War-Civilians-Helmunds-ebook/dp/B00LMTLVOW/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1413390516&sr=8-1.

history' in Antonio Giustozzi's *Decoding the new Taliban*.[221] This gives a particularly strong overview of the deeply complex interplay between long standing tribal, social, commercial, other disputes, and their relationship with the much more recent conflict involving the Taliban, the government and NATO forces.[222] The Sangin Accord case study was first sketched out in a Royal United Services Institute (in as much detail as then possible since the campaign remained underway), by former Sangin Stabilisation Advisor Phil Weatherill. This is an important source, from someone with deep knowledge of the case study. In *Note from the Field: Targeting the Centre of Gravity – Adapting Stabilisation in Sangin*, he sets out how "an alliance between the UK district stabilisation team, UK battle groups, and the Afghan District Governor helped to build stability from the district centre out. By focusing on locally owned and implemented service delivery, the District Governor's office gained legitimacy and effectiveness – and an offer of peace from groups aligned to the Taliban."[223] Julius Cavendish, writing in summer 2014 also after pertinent field experience, has conducted the fullest research account yet published on the specifics and personalities behind the Sangin Accord, for the Afghanistan Analysts Network.[224] Finally, a reduced version of my thesis was published by Oxford University Press in December 2014, as part of the edited volume, *At the end of Military Intervention*.[225]

Many of these sources contain little analysis of Afghan and foreign actions in the context of their impact on local politics, or progress towards the social outcomes that lie at the heart of counterinsurgency and political reconciliation. The primary focus remains on the (usually tactical) actions and experiences of international military forces. This is somewhat ironic given the clear acknowledgement in British and US military doctrine of the primacy of political purpose in the counterinsurgency theory and doctrine driving the campaign. Therefore this thesis offers a new and important

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[221] Tom Coghlan, "The Taliban in Helmand: An Oral History," in *Decoding the New Taliban*, ed. Antonio Giustozzi, (London: Hurst, 2009), pp. 119-153.
[222] See the Glossary for more on NATO.
[223] Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 90.
[224] Julius Cavendish, "Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory: How ISAF Infighting Helped Doom Sangin to Its Ongoing Violence," 2014, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/snatching-defeat-from-victory-how-isaf-infighting-helped-doom-sangin-to-its-ongoing-violence(accessed 29th October 2014).
[225] Mark Beautement, "Negotiated Agreements in Tactical Transitions: The Sangin Accord 2011," in *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical, Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Transition, Handover and Withdrawal*, ed. Timothy Clack and Robert Johnson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

contribution to the history of the Helmand conflict as well as contributing to the methodological application of Ripeness theory to the analysis of conflict termination.

Case study data sources and research ethics

The data available for the Sangin Accord case study falls into three categories, two secondary and one primary. Firstly, there is the published literature referred to previously. Secondly, this is supplemented by existing data sourced under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, directly from UK Government Foreign and Commonwealth Office archives. Thirdly, I draw upon new data from 35 primary source interviews, conducted in Kabul and Helmand Province, and kindly provided by Professors Theo Farrell and Antonio Giustozzi at King's College London (KCL).[226] This dataset constitutes original interview transcripts with Afghan sources, including self-identified Taliban commanders. Fifteen of these come from Farrell's research conducted under the Economic and Social Research Council programme "Organisations, Innovation and Security in the Twenty-First Century" (1st April 2009 – 31st July 2012).[227] Other data comes from Giustozzi, a world expert on the Taliban with over 10 years of experience on this type of field research. Elements of this data set have been referenced in an article published by Farrell and Giustozzi.[228] The interviews were conducted in Pashto or Dari by Afghan researchers, journalists by profession, supervised by Giustozzi, using a standard questionnaire, and then translated into English.

An overview of the new primary sources is provided in Annex A. Each source has been given an anonymised in-text reference code to protect the identity of the individual. Additional information that is not deemed to add risk to the individual is provided in the table. If it was provided, the subject's exact age has been protected but the decade within which it falls has been indicated. This allows an analysis of the factors that may have affected the subject's experience and attitude, especially the

[226] For biographies of both Professors, see: King's College London, "Professor Theo Farrell Biography," 2014, http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/warstudies/people/professors/farrell.aspx(accessed 19th October 2014). King's College London, "Professor Antonio Giustozzi Biography," 2014, http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/warstudies/people/visiting/giustozzi.aspx(accessed 16th October 2014).

[227] For details of this research project, see: Economic and Social Research Council, "Organisations, Innovation and Security in the Twenty-First Century," 2014, http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-071-27-0069/read(accessed 11th October 2014).

[228] See Theo and Antonio Giustozzi Farrell, "The Taliban at War: Inside the Helmand Insurgency 2004-2012," *International Affairs* vol. 89, no. 4 (2013), pp. 845-871.

political and education system in place at definitive periods, without providing specific identifying characteristics. This allows the sources to be assessed according to their generation where that proves useful for explaining the range of approaches taken by groups to the Sangin Accord. Of note, the category relating to knowledge of the Sangin Accord captures only the descriptor most directly confirmed by the interview transcript. It does not confirm or rule out multiple characteristics (a source might in reality have been involved but not shown this in their interview responses, for example). As far as possible, multiple confirmations across the primary and secondary dataset are used, to counter potential weaknesses such as confirmation bias, a small data pool, translation inaccuracies, and the author's personal connection to the subject. No conclusions have been drawn from evidence provided by only one source except where noted in the footnotes, and only where the credibility and accuracy is verified by the author's participant observation. These instances have been avoided as far as possible. Except where noted, the characteristics presented in the table reflect the chosen labels and testimonial data provided by the subjects themselves during interview. Afghan sources have been translated by near-bilingual native speakers, and in a small number of cases have been edited only for clarity of structure, not for meaning, and to remove names or data that increases the risk of identification. This Afghan-focused data is then fused with the secondary sources in English. The outcome brings into circulation a new historical and political case study, based on some completely new data, and some existing data unused in this context. Both King's College London University and UK Ministry of Defence Ethics Committees have approved the project.[229]

Thesis overview

The thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter two presents the longer-term conflict drivers, setting the historical context, and establishes the narratives and themes present up to Afghanistan's independence and the years immediately after it. These

[229] For university approval, see: Mark Beautement, *King's College London Research Ethics Protocol SSHL/12/13-48 Approved 28th May 2013*2013. For UK Ministry of Defence approval see: Mark Beautement, *UK Ministry of Defence Research Protocol 415/MODREC/13 Approved 25th October 2013* (2013).

relate specifically to water and land disputes, interactions with foreigners, challenges between central government and outlying areas, and the problems with reforms and modernisation in Afghanistan. These older narratives matter because perceptions of them vary between generations, for those involved in the case study.

Covering the period from 1933 to 1994, chapter three sets the scene for the US-led intervention in 2001 with a review of the reforms under Zahir Shah, and then the subsequent Soviet experience from 1979-1989. The significance of the rise of a functioning narcotics industry in response to the Russian invasion is introduced. It then describes the significance of the civil war that followed – mixed with the preceding narratives – for the rise of the Taliban. This period of history relates closely to the oldest generation alive during the Sangin Accord, and their children.

Chapter four briefly covers the rise of the Taliban and its relationship with al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. The impact of the attacks on 11th September 2001, the rise of President Karzai, and NATO's intervention are then outlined. The chapter finishes with the NATO expansion into the south of Afghanistan, and Helmand Province, in 2006; this is where the modern precursors to the Sangin Accord begin. This timeframe covers the experiences of the younger generations involved in the case study.

Chapter five reviews the political developments in Helmand in 2006-2007, including the onset and ending of the Musa Qala Accord (2006). A near-simultaneous offer in Sangin that same year is also assessed, and its relationship on a failed uprising in 2007 that affected mindsets in the run up to the Sangin Accord. NATO's policies of reconciliation and reintegration are reviewed, alongside Afghan approaches to negotiation and communication with opponents.

Chapter six offers a detailed chronology and narrative modern history of Sangin District from 2006, and describes political progress towards the Accord in 2011. The narrative uses Afghan primary sources set against secondary source Western literature and public records sourced under the UK Freedom of Information Act 2000. Secondary sources frame this history, adding additional corroboration, and further context and specific details not covered by field research and official documents.

Chapter seven uses Ripeness theory and additions – alongside military doctrine – to explain the Sangin Accord. The analysis considers whether a military Mutually Hurting Stalemate, alongside a Way Out, is sufficient. Further work incorporates government capacity, reconstruction spending, community motivations and political legitimacy. The results are set within a wider policy context, considering how to promote political outcomes using military, development, and diplomatic resources.

Chapter eight offers conclusions on the importance of historical antecedents in the explanation for the Sangin Accord, and the relative merits of Ripeness theory and its additions as explanatory tools. These conclusions aim to ensure that – combined with the high level of detail provided in the historical narrative – this case study is useful for future analysis work, as part of a larger group of case studies.[230] This is intended to ensure the conclusions make a new and credible contribution to understanding about the relationship between the applications of military force, alongside diplomatic and development activity, and the onset of genuine negotiations at the local level – addressing the practitioners' tension between Ripeness theory's requirement for military stalemate and the policy makers' desire to negotiate from a position of military advantage.

[230] This might be achieved for example by keeping certain variables constant: the local level, plus either features of the conflict that are similar to Sangin (e.g. intensity, rural, number and type of conflict parties), plus the presence of a negotiated agreement).

CHAPTER 2: AN EARLY HISTORY OF SANGIN DISTRICT

Afghan Government efforts to bring about the Sangin Accord of 2011 aligned Kabul's priorities with those of the international community and many local actors: communities, their elders, the disaffected, government officials and elements aligned to the Taliban. This proved to be central pillar of the strategy, correlating in the case study with Ripeness' theoretical need for the creation of a possible Way Out. Geographic and political landscapes, notably involving land and water ownership and access, strongly influenced the foundations for negotiation and created deep conflict drivers. While there were distinctly near-term facets to this complex and dynamic political environment, as will be shown in chapters four and five, there were also ancient roots stretching back centuries.

The history of the Sangin area, and its wider environs, is therefore critical for a case study of the Sangin Accord itself, for two reasons. First, conflict drivers affecting the negotiating parties, and their perceptions of each other, had historical antecedents stretching back over 200 years. These included: a long history of interaction between locals, and foreigners perceived as partisan in disputes – revisited in 19th Century wars with Britain, covered in chapter three; significant unresolved disagreements over land and water rights, at the local level but also across national borders into contemporary Pakistan and Iran; and local groups seeking to preserve degrees of political autonomy within the context of wider conflict or power struggles, often perpetuated by larger regional rivalries. Second, the case study suggests that these factors affected the perceptions required for the creation of the constituent parts of a Ripe Moment. This contrasts with core Ripeness theory, that considers military Hurt in the current conflict to be the dominant motivating force for negotiation.

These important historical themes are reviewed in the following chapters. Much of it falls outside the immediate memory of those involved in the Sangin Accord, but – as is shown in the case study analysis – the varied experiences of the different generations involved in that negotiated agreement leads to important differences in perception towards these older narratives.

Introducing Sangin: Sarwan Qala, the place of the caravans

The Sangin area has affected politics and society in southern Afghanistan – and beyond – for hundreds of years. Its geography and human activity greatly influence the movement of people and goods, nearby security, and the extension of government.

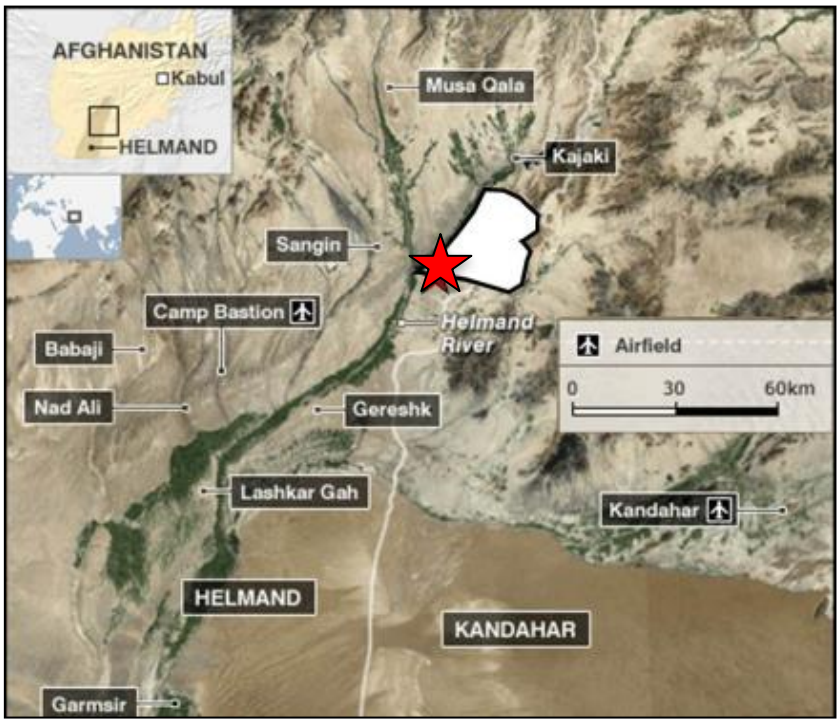

Figure 11: Approximate location of Sangin District (in white) and town (the red star) within Helmand Province, Afghanistan.[231]

It is fertile land, ideally situated on the upper reaches of the Helmand River. Ancient trade and transit routes run through the area from the west, through Herat, to Kandahar in the east, and this axis remains influential today. This perhaps explains the local name *Sarawan Qala*, identified by locals to mean "place of the caravans."[232] K*alā* (قلا) or *qala* means fort or castle. Distinct from other common names, locals never used (Sarawan) *kalaey* (کلي), [anglicised as Kalay], meaning village.[233]

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[231] Adapted from BBC, "NATO Forces in Afghanistan to Launch Helmand Operation," 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8478220.stm(accessed 23rd June 2014).

[232] Participant observation from 2009-10 showed variations in pronunciation (and therefore anglicised spelling) from *Sarawan*, *Sarwan*, to *Saravan* and *Sarvan*. Related terms include *Sapwan Qala* used generally used to designate a specific village or sub-zone within a wider area known as *Sarawan Qala*. On trade caravans in the Islamic world, including Afghanistan, see T. Matthew. Ciolek, "A Catalogue of Georeferenced Caravanserais/Khans. Old World Trade Routes (OWTRAD) Project," Asia Pacific Research Online., 2004-present., www.ciolek.com/OWTRAD/caravanserais-catalogue-00.html(accessed 15th July 2014).

[233] Henry George Raverty, "A Dictionary of the Puk'hto, Pus'hto, or Language of the Afghans: With Remarks on the Originality of the Language, and Its Affinity to Other Oriental Tongues," Williams and Norgate, 1867, Published online by the University of Chicago and Digital Dictionaries of South Asia, at

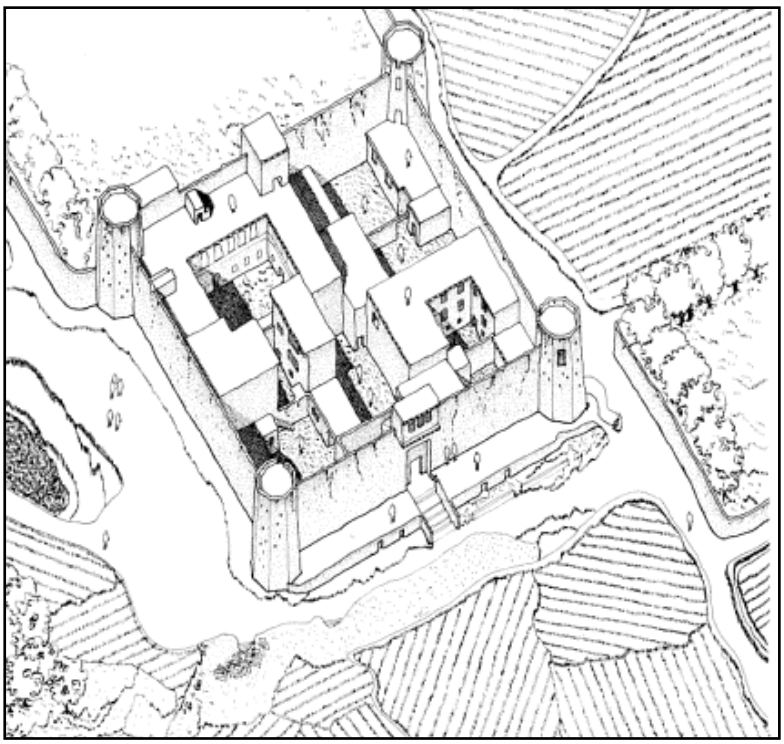

Figure 12: A high-prestige qala.[234]

Names and labels in northern Helmand Province have fluid definitions and relate to human groupings as much as physical geography. *Sarawan Qala* had at times one, or multiple connotations simultaneously, though always referring to land north-east of Sangin town itself, and never spanning the Helmand River. Meanings included a small collection of dwellings; a specific village; the lower part of the Sangin Valley for just a few kilometres north of the town; the entire Upper Sangin Valley (USV), which is approximately 30km long (from the town centre to the formal northern edge of the administrative district); traditionally Alikozai tribal lands; or the area's people and community.[235] This may be as much to do with varying levels of education and experience as the fact that "people's identities are constructed in relationship to changing hierarchies of status, sect, and ethnicity."[236] At times therefore, the importance of formal maps was heavily diminished, since "the world constructed by

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http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/raverty/. Consider for example the difference between the spellings, and therefore meanings, for the population centres of Musa Qala and Shin Kalay in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

[234] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: An Atlas of Indigenous Domestic Architecture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), p. 188.

[235] Participant observation from 2009-10 confirmed in multiple interviews during the author's time in Sangin. This posed significant problems for accuracy during discussions about the location of different social, political or geographic features.

[236] Magnus and Benjamin D. Hopkins Marsden, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier* (London: Hurst and Company, 2012), p. 177.

local inhabitants stands in stark contrast to that conceived for them by external state authorities," both from Kabul and by outsiders.[237] This varied approach posed challenges for conflict parties involved in the Sangin Accord, in defining and agreeing the geographical, social and political boundaries bound by the agreement.

Situating Sangin and Helmand

Great Britain has a long history with Afghanistan, and Helmand Province in particular. Sangin is a mere 30 miles westwards over the Ghorak Pass from the battleground at Maiwand. In July 1880, an Afghan army under Governor Ayyub encountered at Maiwand a smaller British force, but armed with modern weaponry. "The Afghans were able to close their formation by taking large numbers of casualties and annihilated the enemy in fierce combat."[238] The site holds a central place in Afghan lore about the British, and the foreigner.

Maiwand is also where Sherlock Holmes' companion and Arthur Conan Doyle's fictitious narrator, Dr. Watson, was wounded; Conan Doyle himself served at Maiwand. The name Sangin is, however, almost entirely absent from English-speaking historical records pre-dating 21st Century military activity there. Captain W.A. Broome's journals from the Second Afghan War offer one of the very few references. Writing in the 1880s following military service in the area he describes Sangin as "a village in Kala Gaz, on the left bank of the Helmand, 24 miles above Grishk [Gereshk] and about 7 miles south east of Shahban. There are only 5 houses."[239] The name Sangin (سنګین in Pushto) meant 'made of stone', weighty, or solid according to 19th Century researcher Major Henry Raverty.[240] One hundred and twenty-six years after Captain Broome passed through, those five houses had become a small town, and

[237] Ibid.

[238] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 144. For a detailed account from a British military perspective, see Leigh Maxwell, *My God - Maiwand! Operations of the South Afghanistan Field Force (1878-80).* (London: Leo Cooper, 1979), especially, pp. 126-167.

[239] Captain W.A. Broome, *Second Afghan War*, quoted in the UK India Office papers published as L.W. Adamec, *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan* (Akadem. Druck-u. Verlagsanst., 1985), Vol. 2, p. 254.

[240] Raverty, 1867, o*p. cit.*, Published online by the University of Chicago and Digital Dictionaries of South Asia, at http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/raverty/. Search term: Sangin.

Sangin a name synonymous with intense combat.[241] The names Sangin and Helmand as references to areas of territory stem from comparatively recent administrative changes, introduced alongside the new constitution in 1964.[242] These changing and multi-layered meanings illustrate important subtleties, since sub-regional boundaries are "the products of successive Kabul regimes seeking to increase the power of their centralized governments by diminishing their regional rivals through ever-greater division. Afghans themselves recognize this by their persistent use of older names."[243] For the Accord in 2011, this manifested itself in a sense of tribal entitlement to specific territory in and around Sangin, defined and described in terms pre-dating the 20th Century administrative measures.

While Helmand has existed as an administrative province for some 50 years, the eponymous river is many thousands of years old and scholars must be careful to distinguish the terms, and qualifications of influence – both within Afghanistan, and beyond. "The great Helmand River and its tributaries end up in the desert marshes of Seistan [now Sistan] on the Iranian border, squeezed between Registan ("Land of Sand") on one side and the *Dasht-i-Margo* ("Desert of Death") on the other."[244] The Helmand had less impact on human interaction than rivers in Europe or Africa, for example, because none of Afghanistan's rivers reach the ocean. "Rivers in Afghanistan therefore do not connect the country to the outside world or facilitate trade."[245] The flow also varies enormously, from fast-paced and deep torrents in flood season to barely a trickle in the dry months. The Helmand River has few all-year fording points, as its width and depth make it largely impassable to the movement of supplies or groups of people when in spate. A technical hydrological and geological survey conducted in 2006 for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) describes how "annual discharge has varied by a factor of five over 28 years of

[241] See for example Mark Urban, "The Ingredients Making Sangin So Lethal," 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/newsnight/markurban/2010/03/the_ingredients_making_sangin.html. Missy Ryan, "US Seeks Surge Success from Lethal Afghan Outpost," (9th March 2011). http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/09/us-afghanistan-sangin-idUSTRE72809M20110309?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews (accessed 15th July 2014).
[242] Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2012), p. 146, and pp. 142-154.
[243] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 341. As a counter, it is also worth considering if the smaller units of organisation helped administration become more effective, given the distances from Kabul.
[244] Ibid., p. 47.
[245] Ibid.

continuous record on the Helmand" (between 1947-1975).[246] This has two significant consequences, locally and regionally. First, "the erratic behavior of the Helmand and the Arghandab is a characteristic of these streams; droughts and floods are not rare events in the lower Helmand Basin."[247] Second "the unpredictability of streamflow from year to year has a marked effect on the inhabitants of Sistan,"[248] across the border in Iran's turbulent Baluch-dominated province.[249] The United Nations Environment Program concluded in 2006:

> "The annual precipitation in the lower Sistan basin is about 50 mm. Under such conditions, life is only possible if an 'external' water source is also available to nourish the region. The Helmand River plays that major role in the Sistan area, by draining the snowmelt waters from the mountains of the southern Hindu Kush."[250]

This relationship between Helmand's water flow and Iranian communities is also long-standing, for "in ancient and medieval times, Seistan, [sic] at the end of the Helmand's drainage, rivalled Qandahar in importance, but then declined when its irrigation system failed."[251] These long-term and significant variations in river levels may well explain the limits of Arab conquest in the area. Arab expansion in the 9th Century AD "was never much further advanced that Herat and Bust [Bost, near modern-day Lashkar Gah] and even there was confined to the main lines of communication, tenuous and often intermittent … East of the Helmand there was no

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[246] John W. Whitney, *Geology, Water, and Wind in the Lower Helmand Basin, Southern Afghanistan Scientific Investigations Report 2006–5182* (Reston, Virginia: US Geological Survey, 2006), p. 24. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADH905.pdf

[247] Ibid. For some specifics, see for example data on Sangin and 49 other streams in: Tara Williams-Sether, *Streamflow Characteristics of Streams in the Helmand Basin, Afghanistan* (Reston, Virginia: US Geological Survey, 2008), p. 249-254.
Data collected between 1953 and 1960 on the Sangin Wash (Seraj Canal) "100 m upstream from office of the Governor of Sangin District in village of Sangin … 35 km northeast of Girishk, and about 40 km downstream from Kajaki Dam" (ibid. pp. 249-254), showed a variation in the mean discharge (cubic metres per second) between a minimum of 0.3 in February 1957 and 13.5 in April 1955 – a maximum flow 45 times larger than the recorded minimum.

[248] Whitney, 2006, o*p. cit.*

[249] For coverage of potential links between drought and instability, see for example: Amir Hossein Asayesh, "Poverty and Blind Violence in Baluchestan," 2008, http://mianeh.net/article/poverty-and-blind-violence-baluchestan(accessed 19th July 2014). Zia Ur Rehman, *The Baluch Insurgency: Linking Iran to Pakistan* (www.peacebuilding.no/, 2014). Chris Zambelis, *The Evolution of the Ethnic Baluch Insurgency in Iran* (CTC Sentinel: Combating Terrorism Center, West Point, 2014).

[250] United Nations Environment Programme, *History of Environmental Change in the Sistan Basin Based on Satellite Image Analysis: 1976 – 2005* (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations, 2006), p. 5.

[251] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 50. Also Alessandro Bausani, *The Persians* (London: HarperCollins, 1971), p. 125. "The ruins of Sistan, which lie in land which was once fertile but that is now uninhabitable because the canals from the river Helmand were destroyed, bear eloquent witness to the passage of Tamerlane."

occupation."[252] For many centuries, Helmand was therefore significant only for the division the great river created between rival groups, and the impact it had on movement to and from the east and west, and on the fertility of neighbouring lands – especially around its lower reaches in modern-day Iran. The relationship between activities in Helmand and Iranian water security would also be a factor in the 2011 Sangin Accord.

Figure 13: The route of the Helmand River from Afghanistan's central mountainous region, and Kandahar's Arghandab, into Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan Province.[253]

[252] Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, (17th reprint, 2009) ed. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 100.

[253] Kmusser, "Helmand River Map (Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Via Wikimedia Commons)," 2010, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Helmandrivermap.png#mediaviewer/File:Helmandrivermap.png(accessed 28th July 2014).

The Afghans and the struggle between Persia and India

Within the borders of modern Afghanistan, the Helmand River sat within the sphere of influence of the city of Kandahar, to its east. National borders were set over centuries, often through the independence and self-determination of neighbours, as well as disputes between bordering territories and Afghanistan herself after independence from the British in 1919.[254] It is therefore more accurate to talk of regions or spheres of influence, especially when analysing older eras.

Figure 14: Afghanistan's regions – a layer of analysis between nation and province.[255]

From around the 5th century AD Persian, Arab and Indian leaders vied for control in the area.[256] Bost, just outside modern-day Lashkar Gah (and now the site of

[254] The government in Kabul continues to reject any formalisation of the existing Durand Line separating Afghanistan and Pakistan, and debate continues: Tayyab Mahmud, "Colonial Cartographies, Postcolonial Borders, and Enduring Failures of International Law: The Unending Wars Along the Afghanistan-Pakistan Frontier," *Brook. J. International Law.* 36, (2010). This remains the most contentious border: outgoing President Hamid Karzai is alleged to have called it "a line of hatred that raised a wall between the two brothers," see: Selig S. Harrison, "The Fault Line between Pashtuns and Punjabis in Pakistan," Washington Post, 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/10/AR2009051001959.html(accessed 19th July 2014).

[255] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 43.

[256] For an accessible overview see: Homa Katazian, *The Persians: Ancient, Medieval and Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), chapters 1 and 2. For a detailed study (from an outsider's pro-Imperial perspective), by a Briton with service in both areas: Lt. Colonel Sir Wolseley Haig, ed. *The Cambridge History of India*, 6 vols., vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), especially chapter 2. For a concise summary of the 10th-16th Centuries: Stephen F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the*

the city's airport) was the winter capital of the Persian Ghaznavid Empire for approximately two centuries, from 976, until its destruction in 1150 AD began contemporary Kandahar's rise to importance.[257] Kandahar city was a key trading centre, and a constant bone of contention between empires based in Iran and India – illustrated by frequent switches in political allegiance.[258] Persians saw it as a prize for expelling Indian influence, seeking plunder and the destruction of Hindu temples.[259] Later, Babur – in the 16th Century – considered Kandahar an essential stepping stone for his contemplated invasion of India, eventually capturing it in 1522.[260] Kandahar also gives its name to a broad swathe of territory constituting most of contemporary southern Afghanistan – both a culturally defined region, and a formal state province. Looking west from the Helmand River, the lands that border modern-day Iran would become known as Farah, occupying the traditional route to the trading city of Herat. Travellers wishing to move on an east-west axis had two choices: scale the mountainous highlands of Afghanistan's centre or cross the river Helmand – see Figure 13, previously.

Aspiring empires used a variety of strategies, including tribute, conquest, vassalage and alliance to secure their interests. The Safavid Persians, for example, "capitalised on venomous Pashtun tribal rivalries to divide and conquer the Afghans sowing animosity between the two largest Pashtun confederations."[261] Larger aggregated groups of tribes are commonly called 'federations' in the Afghan context: as set out in Annex C, within the Pashtun tribes, the first distinction is between the two most numerous groups, the Durrani federation (roughly south-western) and the Ghilzai (south-eastern). Within the Durrani federation, the Zirak branch – including the Barakzai, Alikozai, Popalzai tribes – is historically the more favoured and prestigious, and the Kings of Afghanistan have come from these tribes. The Panjpai (literally, five

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Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 10-47, especially pp. 17-22.

[257] Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, p. 171.

[258] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, pp. 50-51. The history of the city since around 1278 AD "is one of continual sieges and changes of government": S. W. Helms, "Kandahar of the Arab Conquest," *World Archaeology* 14, no. 3 (1983), pp. 344-5.

[259] History Today, "Historical Dictionary: Mahmud of Ghazni," 2012, http://www.historytoday.com/historical-dictionary/m/mahmud-ghazni(accessed 19th July 2014).

[260] Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, p. 172.

[261] Tomsen, 2011, o*p. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

fingers), and containing the Ishaqzai, Noorzai, Alizai tribes – is perceived to be the lesser branch, and central authority tends to exclude these. It is little surprise that the Taliban have heavy support within these tribes. Their populations had as yet no clear unified national or political identity. Nor were they always tied to specific pieces of land, for communities were typically the subjects of others, whether they lived a nomadic or sedentary existence – defined by Thomas Barfield as "the elusive" and the "the fixed."[262] A stronger bond between identity and land would be forged in some specific cases, including Sangin, based on 18th Century events that remain influential today.

By the 16th Century AD, "local populations took such foreign rulership as part of the inevitable ebb and flow of the region's political dynamics, and they did not resist it."[263] Deal making (and re-negotiating), as well as political brinkmanship involving foreign influencers was and remains a central part of the social fabric in Helmand. Throughout the region, before the arrival of European concepts of statehood (which rested on the control of territory and its delineation),[264] residents, and rulers stressed, "a relational rather than territorial focus which existed in Islamic legal principles as well as in tribal concepts of use rather than land value."[265] The disposition of those who controlled the rare but vital all-year crossing points was therefore highly significant, politically and logistically. The fort at Gereshk (alternatively Grishk) was one of these, watching over "a strategic crossing point on the major fluvial barrier between Herat and Kandahar."[266] Gereshk would later become the family bastion for the second dynasty of the Afghan Durrani leaders, from the Barakzai tribe (and Mohammadzai sub-tribe).[267] Sangin, the town in Sarwan Qala, and the main political group based there from the Alikozai tribe, would increase in importance largely because of the impact that this more mountainous region had on the security of the lowland river crossing and the seat of the Afghan kings at Gereshk. Capacity to enforce Royal control over all territory and communities was limited, as was the will to do so:

[262] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 68.
[263] Ibid., p. 93.
[264] Marsden, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 25.
[265] Ibid., p. 28.
[266] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 20.
[267] Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, p. 267, p. 269. For a taxonomy of Pashtun tribes see Annex C.

> "The ploy was to assert nominal sovereignty over people in marginal areas without bothering them much. They need not be ruled directly or subject to the same style of government as were the people of the irrigated plains and valleys."[268]

By the mid-18th Century AD, Persian leaders asserted dominance in the south and west of modern Afghanistan, but "fortuitous geostrategic circumstances opened a window for Afghans to throw off Mughal and Safavid control, establish an independent Afghan state, and briefly create an empire for themselves."[269] If assessed along tribal lines, this episode mirrors rivalries between the Durrani (broadly, based in south-west Afghanistan) and Ghilzai (south-eastern) sub-sections of the Pashtun ethnicity still observed today, with Kandahar city in the south-east a prize treasured by both groups.

In 1709 Mirwais Hotek, the head of the Ghilzai Hotek tribe (also the tribe of Mullah Mohammad Omar, Taliban leader from 1994 until his death in 2013) declared Kandahar independent after massacring the Persian establishment at a banquet. His brother succeeded him, and invaded Persia in 1722, capturing the capital Isfahan and ruling for 16 years.[270] The Persian leader Nadir Quli ("Slave of the Wonderful," who would rename himself Nadir Shah) sought revenge, and defeated Afghan Abdali/Durrani fighters at Herat in 1731.[271] Shah incorporated these vanquished warriors into his army, liberating Isfahan in 1738 and, exploiting the long-standing Pashtun rivalry, then overturning the self-declared Ghilzai kingdom of Kandahar two years later.[272] Shah would go on to grant the Abdali/Durrani land titles in Helmand and Kandahar in reward for their military service against the Mughals.[273] The size, location, population, and richness of these land grants form an important part of the relative power balance both between the Abdali and Ghilzai, and also within the Durrani federation that was to emerge from Abdali roots in 1747 – widely considered as the birth of the Afghan nation. These same land titles formed the foundations of the

[268] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 68. This policy interplay between incentive and coercion – discussed later – gave rise to significant debate about methods of frontier management, typified by the contrasting systems of the 19th Century British frontier officers Robert Sandeman and William Merewether. See also: Marsden, 2012, o*p. cit.*, chapter 2.
[269] Tomsen, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 29.
[270] Ibid., p. 30.
[271] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 18.
[272] Tomsen, 2011, o*p. cit.*, pp. 30-31.
[273] Ibid., p. 31.

Alikozai tribe's perceived entitlement to Sangin, and were therefore a motivating factor during the Accord, over 250 years later.

Afghans and outsiders: patronage, autonomy and land rights

Narratives collected between 2008-2010 claimed that the Alikozai tribe received land rights to the Sangin Valley for supporting Persian campaigns against the Mughal emperors of India.[274] Historical research, notably by Thomas Barfield and Mike Martin shows that this is possible. Persian and Indian leaders (and culture) had been competing in Afghanistan directly, and using local groups (now considered Afghans) as proxies, since at least 500 BC. For example, Hinduism was widespread in Afghanistan until Arab and later Persian expansion between the 7th and 11th Centuries AD brought Islam to the area.

The use of the term 'Mughal' in field experience and interviews likely places the land transfer after 1526 AD, the commonly held date for the start of the Mughal rule in India.[275] The last Persian Shah was assassinated by his generals in 1747 AD (1160 AH in the *Hijri* Islamic calendar), ending formal Persian control in the area. Ahmad Shah Durrani was confirmed by *loya jirga* (a traditional 'Grand Assembly' at which national or highly significant leaders are chosen) as the new, and first dominant Afghan leader in southern Afghanistan.[276] Following defeat to Persian forces in 1731, Nadir Shah elevated Ahmad Khan (an earlier name for Ahmad Shah Durrani) to be commander of his largest army's largest cavalry contingent.[277] His principal rivals, the Ghilzai, had been diminished by Nadir Shah, who expelled most of them from Kandahar in 1738 and transferred confiscated lands to the Durrani, in retribution for Ghilzai

[274] Author's interview with Provincial Reconstruction Team official, 11th December 2012. Additional confirmation through participant observation 2009-10 during the author's time in Sangin.

[275] John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, vol. 5 (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 6-7. For a chronology of the Mughal Emperors, their Mongol roots and relationship with Persian/Iran history, see Francis Robinson, "The Mughal Emperors and the Islamic Dynasties of India," *Iran, and Central Asia, London*, (2007), especially p. 112 and pp. 113-179. For an excellent look at the end of the Mughal Empire, at the hands of foreign forces, see William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of Delhi, 1857* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009).

[276] See for example: Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani: Father of Modern Afghanistan* (Gosha-e-Adab, 1977). Barnett R. Rubin, "Lineages of the State in Afghanistan," *Asian Survey* 28, no. 11 (1988), pp. 1191-2.

[277] Tomsen, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 31.

depredations in Persia just a few decades before.[278] It is inconceivable that Ahmad Shah Durrani, for Afghans (and especially Pashtuns) the undisputed founder of modern Afghanistan, would be considered Persian by today's northern Helmandis. Therefore, we can conclude with a degree of certainty that Sangin was given to the Alikozai clans before 1747 and likely after 1731. The Persians sacked Delhi in 1739, a decisive event within this timeframe that may have triggered the reward.[279] Power remained disputed in many areas that now fall within Afghanistan's modern borders, but Ahmad Shah Durrani's ascension certainly established him as the principal political broker and patron in what was then the declining eastern fringe of the Persian control, and is now Afghanistan's Helmand Province. This also illustrates the astute and divisive manner in which foreign aspirations interacted with local Afghan politics, and the challenge of aligning local and international interests constructively. This theme recurs frequently throughout the modern history of Afghanistan, and features strongly in the dynamics surrounding the Sangin Accord.

The Durrani period introduces two key characteristics into Afghan society: locally nuanced features of lineage and power transfer, and, frequently renegotiated relationships between authorities claiming leadership and local social groups. The transfer of official power within the Durrani tribal federation began largely by bloodline and lineage – a *rutbavi* system.[280] This is at odds with the selection of leaders for their quality and credibility in other areas, normally less isolated and less dominated by the Durrani federation; the *quami* model preferred by the Ghilzai.[281] Other characteristics of lineage and descent are also significant, such as Sayyids [alt. Sayed, Sayid], "to whom there still attaches a reputation for past or present sanctity or piety."[282]

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[278] Ibid. Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, chapter 16, especially pp. 252-256.

[279] See Muzaffar Alam, "The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-1748," (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), chapter 1, especially pp. 50-51. Legend recounts that the Persian Nadir Shah was invited to take Delhi by an old Punjabi commander, who had been offended by the conduct of his replacement – see M. Longworth Dames, "Balochi Tales [Concluded]," *Folklore* 8, no. 1 (1897), pp. 77-78.

[280] For an example of the family lineages, see: Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, p. 277.

[281] The difference is explained in detail in the meticulous anthropological study of a single village near Kabul, in: Noah Coburn, *Bazaar Politics: Power and Pottery in an Afghan Market Town* (Stanford University Press, 2011), notably chapter 5 "Leadership, Descent and Marriage" (pp. 76-105).

[282] Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, p. 101.

> "Even today their prestige is a living thing, and people will reverently kiss a Sayyid's hand." Whether or not they are descended from the Prophet (by the union of his daughter Fatima, with Ali) they are certainly the descendants of Arab colonists or missionaries who came to these parts in the early Islamic centuries, partly to propagate the Faith and partly to assist in the onward march of conquest.[283]

Since the centralised state has struggled to establish universal control over the land for centuries, authorities have sought to extend their influence through relationships with periphery groups based on military service, or financial interactions (such as tax or subsidy). Power and perceptions of security link strongly to the size of a group's land holdings and the number of men they can provide for military service[284] (including community defence, but also to support allies): offering "a horseman for every plough" also brought an exemption from taxation.[285] These factors remained influential beyond the 18th Century – and have a degree of importance today, especially when the tribal hierarchy is strong, despite the effects of education, technology, modern communications, and urbanisation. Understanding the terms under which local armed groups would resist, or be co-opted into, formal state security forces (or work with their international backers) was a central theme for the 2011 case study.

From separatists to an independent Afghanistan

The early years of the newly independent Afghans were characterised by the hunt for recognition, conquest, and plunder in foreign lands. Almost the first act of Ahmad Shah Durrani after the death of Nadir Shah was to plunder a caravan full of his

[283] Ibid., p. 102.

[284] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 19. This raises the interesting possibility that some conservative, traditional areas of Afghanistan may judge the relative strength and importance of the contemporary government according to the size of the state land holdings (and also budget, staff levels) – known collectively as the *tashkiel* – allocated to the District or Provincial government.

[285] Ibid. Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 113. By extension, the application of tax may be seen as a slight, or a sign that the target group is consider inferior or disloyal. Importantly, these early Durrani traditions also explain why there are problems with a universal tax system mandated from Kabul, as exemption from tax – or the selected application of tax burdens onto rivals, or opponents – is a key tool of power. It also shows why some may find the option of a private revenue stream (perhaps from private licit or illicit interests) highly attractive as a key tool of patronage, and counter-intuitively, as a stability measure (in that outlying areas profit from the arrangement too, and are less inclined to violently resist central taxation by the state).

treasure, the fruit of Indian conquests.[286] This tale, and his confirmation as leader by his peers in a loya jirga, is typically romanticised and Ahmad – a mere 24 years old – is described as a humble, quiet young man.[287] But the Durranis knew that only by rallying around the man who had run off with the bulk of Nadir's available treasure, and had elite cavalry contingents under his personal command could they hope to permanently displace their Ghilzai rivals in Kandahar, recover Herat, and expand beyond the Pashtun heartland.[288] The challenge for Durrani was how to manage "independent groups who did not want to be part of a state" and the solution was a system financed by plunder gained during foreign military service.[289] "In his reign of twenty-six years (1747-73) Ahmad Shah swept eight times across the Indus, and ravaged the Punjab as far as Delhi," capturing Peshawar, all of West Punjab, and Kashmir.[290] There was wealth and glory for all, allowing the leader scope to avoid applying burdensome taxes – "he indulged the Durrani to almost a prodigal extent."[291] Ahmad Shah's personal qualities were also significant: he wrote poetry in Pashtu (not Persian), and "was adept in the difficult management of men and tribes and disposed to policies of conciliation, where the way lay open."[292] Nevertheless, his structural changes were immensely far-reaching; his land grants and policy on military service in return for tax exemption enhanced Durrani tribal structures in a hierarchical kinship relationship containing hereditary positions.[293] "In this way the Barakzai, as the most powerful tribe, secured the understanding that they would always be ministers to the Popalzai crown, as well as possessors of the best land in Helmand."[294] Ahmad Shah's death in 1772 brought about great upheaval, and further disunity.

His successors would face three problems: First, a diminishing number of external areas available to conquer, increasing the need to secure finance from their own people. Second, Ahmad's own policies towards administration and tax bred future

[286] Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, p. 256.
[287] Caroe refers to the Amir Abdurrahman's autobiography, describing how Durrani was asked last to share his opinion on the leadership issue, and remained silent: ibid., p. 255.
[288] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 98.
[289] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 19.
[290] Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, pp. 256-257.
[291] Rawlinson, *Report on the Dooranee* Tribes, 1841, quoted in Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 19.
[292] Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, p. 259.
[293] Based on Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 18-19. Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 104-5.
[294] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 20.

instability. Third, their weaker personal qualities made internal management more difficult and challenges to leadership more common. Ahmad Shah's favouritism towards his own people had less impact on internal stability because of conquest opportunities but, once these reduced, his policy of "governing the tribes lightly while levying heavy taxes on the non-tribal parts of the empire" would become more and more inflammatory.[295] He had also "conquered territories that had yet to be incorporated administratively" Into a more centralised, or state, system.[296] Future attempts to do so, especially in Peshawar, were perceived as undue encroachment; a mindset that remains prevalent in fringe areas today. Durrani's death triggered infighting, and his son and heir designate, Timur Shah, took over after crushing a rival claim headed by his brother. While Timur's reign was well handled, the manner of his accession – and the struggle after his demise – were just the start of "successional struggles, which eventually allowed a Barakzai dynasty, led by Dost Mohammad, to usurp the Popalzai throne in 1826."[297] This political situation was complicated further by the Russian-British rivalry playing out across the Eastern hemisphere, dubbed "The Great Game."

It is worth reviewing this 19th Century history in a little more detail, as the same themes influenced attitudes towards international forces (and the political intentions behind their presence), and perceptions of Afghanistan's neighbours described in the case study. Russian relationships with leaders around Herat (on Afghanistan's western border with modern Iran) and Moscow's perceived influence with Dost Mohammad were partly to blame for Britain's intervention in 1839 that attempted to place Shah Shuja (one of Timur's sons) as a puppet ruler.[298] British efforts to oust Dost Mohammad led to the deposition of his two brothers, who controlled Kandahar (the old capital) and Gereshk (the principal river crossing in Helmand Province). Harsh tax collection (enforced by the British, and conducted by the Barakzai authorities) triggered an Alizai-led tribal uprising in north Helmand in the Alizai heartland of

[295] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 104.
[296] Ibid., p. 106.
[297] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 20.
[298] This is described in the academically rigorous and very readable William Dalrymple, *Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013). Britain perhaps saw in Shuja characteristics that would make him susceptible to outside influence. Of him, the British Envoy Alexander Burnes wrote [Dalrymple, p. 58.]: "his manners and address are certainly highly polished; but his judgement does not rise above mediocrity." Dalrymple also emphasises the British role in fomenting unnecessary war.

Zamindawar. This led eventually to a British retreat from Helmand in spring 1841, preceding the nation-wide turmoil later that year in the wake of British envoy Alexander Burnes' violent murder in Kabul and the humiliating annihilation of General Elphinstone's retreat from Kabul in January 1842. Traditionally the name for much of the south of the country, Zamindawar is now a smaller area between modern-day Musa Qala, Sangin, and Kajaki (in old Persian: "the land of the justice giver").[299] Actors in the Sangin Accord would seek align themselves with these older narratives, as important sources of credibility and legitimacy.

Timur Shah had established his winter palace in Peshawar (contributing to the sense that Pashtun identity spans the Durand line), later established between Afghanistan and Pakistan. He also moved the capital from Kandahar to Kabul in the 1770s "in an attempt to reduce the influence of the Pashtun tribes permanently."[300] The British 19th Century experiences, as with the Persians and Mughals before them, showed that local rivalries and subtleties between the tribes remained significant factors in the success of policies aimed at the state as a whole, or targeted at the capital. The fear of Russian encroachment towards India accelerated British involvement in southern Afghanistan.[301] Afghan central authorities also faced continued financial problems, and 1856-7 saw a vital change in policy: the British subsidised Afghan local groups to fight Russian influence in Herat, sometimes directly, or through the state. This had a fundamental impact on the relationship between Afghan ruler and tribes enshrined by Ahmad Shah Durrani. The ruler no longer had to rely on the tribes for revenue or military service (since he could purchase arms using foreign funds), and the tribes knew that they would be able to gain resources from the state in return for stability, or threatening instability. This theme returns in the Sangin Accord, which involved bargaining over (de-)stabilising behaviour and international funding between local groups in fringe areas, and the state itself.

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[299] Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (Brill Archive, 2002), p. 432. Olaf Caroe's map appears to label all land west of the river Helmand as Zamindawar: Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, map inside back cover, 'Tribal Locations of the Pathans'. It is interesting also to relate the name to the Hindi word *zamindari*, meaning lordship: see Nick Robins, *The Corporation That Changed the World: How the East India Company Shaped the Modern Multinational* (Pluto Press London, 2006), p. 11.

[300] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 105.

[301] This fear continued to have a material impact of government planning. See for example Robert Johnson, ""Russians at the Gates of India"? Planning the Defense of India, 1885-1900," *The Journal of Military History* vol. 67, no. 3 (2003).

British actions in 1840 also fundamentally changed the role of religion in Afghan internal politics (which had usually involved Muslims disputing with each other). Their "occupation of Afghanistan in support of Shah Shuja raised the question of whether the regime had lost the authority normally inherent to a Muslim ruler:

> If Shuja's government was just a cloak for the rule of foreign infidels, then rebellion against it would be justified … leaping to the defense of Islam to justify resisting a regime in Kabul or its policies would henceforth become a sword that was rarely sheathed in Afghan politics, regardless of whether foreigners were actually present on Afghan soil."[302]

The British backed Shuja to repel an invasion of economically bounteous India by France and the Russians (who backed Dost Mohammad), and spent much of the 19th Century competing with Great Britain in Europe and for imperial expansion. Though victorious, Shuja was assassinated in 1842, and Dost Mohammad returned for his second term as ruler. Although the British ended the permanent official subsidy payments in September 1858, outside financial aid remained a tactic of influence.[303] Russia and Britain were both able to offer larger sums – sourced from outside Afghanistan – than Afghan rulers in Kabul could (who also had reduced incomes from their much diminished foreign actions, and relied increasingly on divisive internal revenue collection). These drivers return in the 21st Century context, in debates over Afghanistan as a rentier state (set out in chapter one), and the role of international aid and reconstruction spending as a factor in negotiation covered in the case study.

Dost Mohammad's succession was tumultuous and – following rivalry between his sons – in November 1878, British forces again invaded Afghanistan over fears of Russian influence, starting what is now known as the Second Afghan War. Kandahar was occupied, and attempting to defend it from perceived threats from Dost Mohammad's grandson Ayub in Herat, the British sent a Barakzai force, commanded by Kandahar's Governor, to occupy Gereshk as a forward defence. The Gereshk force was reinforced with a detachment under General Burrows[304] but in 1880 the Governor's Barakzai troops mutinied, switching allegiance to Ayub and the

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[302] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 122-123. See also: Elise Weinberg, "Afghan Anti-Foreign Sentiment: A Reality or Misconception?" (Colorado, 2011).
[303] Martin J. Bayly, "Imagining Afghanistan: British Foreign Policy and the Afghan Polity, 1808-1878" (King's College London (University of London), 2013), p. 214.
[304] W. Ashe, *Personal Records of the Kandahar Campaign* (D. Bogue, 1881), pp. 7-8, p. 26..

Zamindawaris he had enlisted from north Helmand.[305] The British withdrew and the tribesmen followed, crossing at Haiderabad, and defeated the British at Maiwand, near present day Sangin on 27th July 1880. The victors were slow to press their advantage and returned to Zamindawar, allowing the British to defeat Ayub at Kandahar later that year.[306] The Alizai tribesmen from Zamindawar were decisive in the wider conflict between Russian-backed Heratis and Kandaharis supported by the British, and in doing so, had helped defeat a western army in the field. The British withdrew, leaving a fractured Afghanistan and paying further subsidies to a disputed Barakzai king – Abdur Rahman – who ruled little more than Kabul.[307] If the Battle of Maiwand in 1880 and the Afghan defeat at Kandahar later that year, left scars "etched in the [Afghan] national psyche, particularly in the northern reaches of Helmand,"[308] do they really motivate modern actions? Perhaps, though likely only as a supporting narrative: Taliban commander Mullah Abdul Haleem Haleem (quoted in 2008) stated, "British soldiers, they think they are there to settle the scores of their great-grandparents who came to occupy Afghanistan but were killed and are buried in Helmand."[309]

Interpretations of foreign intentions, then and now, relate closely to the policies driving interactions with local people – and the manner in which they are implemented. Differences in British Imperial frontier management policies across the area are reflected in the systems devised by British colonial officers Major General William Merewether and Sir Robert Sandeman in Sindh and Baluchistan in the 1870s:

> "The Sandeman policy … consists of an active participation in the life and interests of the people beyond our administrative border, but with the least possible dislocation of the tribal systems." [310]

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[305] General Staff India, *Military Report - Afghanistan : History, Topography, Ethnography, Resources, Armed Forces, Forts and Fortified Posts, Administration and Communication* (Delhi: Government of India Press 1925), p. 55..

[306] Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War against the Taliban* (Da Capo Press, 2009), p. 216.

[307] To this point the preceding paragraph draws extensively from Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, pp. 20-26.

[308] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War within the War for Afghanistan* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 49. Chandrasekaran gives no source for this statement however, but recounts an anecdote from his field research in Musa Qala in which an angry Afghan commander recalls these sentiments.

[309] The Telegraph, "Tactics in Afghanistan: Right or Wrong?," 2008, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/onthefrontline/2171912/Tactics-in-Afghanistan-right-or-wrong.html(accessed 13th October 2014).

[310] Marsden, 2012, o*p. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

Whereas Merewether advocated a:

> "Close[d] border system whereby the tribes beyond the administrative frontier were left to work out their own salvation subject to the limitation that offences against the inhabitants of areas within our administrative border are punished by reprisals across the border, and that subsidies are paid to the tribes to keep the peace, particularly on main trade routes through or bordering on their territory."[311]

Afghan leaders in Kabul, often lacking the military or administrative strength to assert dominance, had to choose between Sandeman's policy of dealing "with the hearts and minds of the people and not only with their fears," and Merewether's blend of uncompromising militarism and social non-intervention.[312] These approaches left perceptions that would be passed between generations and would influence views, and the hostility of responses to future interventions in Afghanistan, including the most recent ISAF campaign.

The early history of Sangin, Helmand, and Afghanistan, offers five important long-term conflict drivers which must be considered in the assessment of the Sangin Accord and the applicability of Ripeness theory to it, which follows in chapter seven. Clear delineations between conflict parties, as Zartman's theory imagines, is shown to be hugely challenging: here multipolar traditional social and political systems interact with outside concepts of power, respect, and organisation, adopting elements and resisting others. The genuine, or sincere, motivations required for a true Ripe Moment are likely to prove very hard to spot, since local groups sought to preserve degrees of political autonomy within the context of wider conflict or power struggles, often perpetuated by larger regional rivalries. A long history of interaction between locals, and foreigners perceived as partisan in disputes (revisited in 19th Century wars with Britain and covered in chapter three) suggests that the trust required for a Way Out would be hard to come by. The formation of a Way Out is further challenged by significant unresolved disagreements over land and water rights, at the local level but also across national borders into contemporary Pakistan and Iran. The actions of a disputed centralising government, whose offices were used to favour or disenfranchise Afghans often based on tribe (as part of strategies to balance power between the

[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid., p. 55.

centre and periphery) – are viewed with suspicion in fringe areas. This undermines both a Way Out, and in additions to Ripeness theory, contributes to a Mutually Hurting Stalemate – when one contains the impact of differences in legitimacy. Since the 18th Century the Alikozai tribe is likely to have used (and been subject to) these factors while seeking to preserve control over their prime ancestral territorial holding in the Sangin Valley. Later chapters demonstrate clearly that negotiating tactics around the Sangin Accord draw upon these historical themes, and that they impact upon explanations grounded in Ripeness theory.[313]

[313] See for example: Robert Johnson, "'Mizh Der Beitabora Khalqi-I': A Comparative Study of Afghan-Pashtun Perspectives on Negotiating with the British and the Soviets, 1839-1989'," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39, no. 4, November (2011), pp. 551-570.

CHAPTER 3: FROM INDEPENDENCE TO INTERVENTION

The contrast between Abdur Rahman's rule, his conservative son Habibullah, and his modernist reform-minded grandson Ammanullah, foreshadow the tensions within modern Afghanistan between establishing the structures and institutions of a state with an outward an international vision, while also paying attention to its people and their relative desire to be ruled by Kabul. This correlates with one of Rubin's observations about Afghanistan as a rentier state, since foreign aid frequently backed reform programs allowing "state leadership to expand the apparatus under its control without bargaining with or being accountable to its citizens."[314] Crucially, this external funding drops significantly after 1919 with consequences for state stability, as discussed later in the chapter. This period of history directly affected the oldest generation alive during the Sangin Accord, or people with whom they had a direct relationship while young. In this sense, it represents a more direct body of experience influencing perceptions of those involved in the 2011 negotiation than the older themes covered previously. It adds some new evolutions with great significance for the case study, notably: 1) the great influence – both positive and negative – of major infrastructure projects, and their potential to be fulcrums for social and political change, and 2) the challenge high value illicit income (in this case, from opium) poses to central governments used to a near-monopoly over access to finance. The 20th Century also reiterates some longer-term themes, including tensions between rural populations and reforming central governments backed by foreign support.

Abdur Rahman (died 1901) favoured strong internal controls and, with a judicious use of British subsidy, made great strides towards the creation of a modern centralised state.[315] His policies were continued by his conservative son Habibullah, after a smooth transition – incredibly, "for the first time in Afghan history there was no war of succession."[316] Policy centred upon weakening his rivals alongside a degree of "non-interference in tribes' internal affairs – provided they pay their dues.[317] This internal policy of neutrality would be affected by the First World War (1914-18). There

[314] Rubin, 1992, o*p. cit.*, p. 78.
[315] For more on this, including the resulting social and cultural consequences, see Bayly, 2013, o*p. cit.*, pp. 30-31.
[316] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 174.
[317] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

was some domestic support for the Ottoman Turks' call for action to defend the Muslim Caliphate, but Afghanistan remained out of the war. Nevertheless, the Afghans would be in conflict just months after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. The Third Anglo-Afghan War began when Afghan forces seized a number of border posts and towns along the north-west frontier, in May 1919. Afghan agitation for full independence was stirred up by the German-Turkish delegation in Kabul during World War One, but the immediate cause was a power struggle in Kabul following the assassination in 1919 of the Amir, Habibullah Khan. The British were taken by surprise, but this was always going to be a one-sided fight.[318] As one historian notes, "British forces in India were depleted and unprepared yet they remained inherently superior to those of Afghanistan in training and equipment, and given that there was not the slightest possibility that His Majesty's Government would stand by while the borders of British India were altered by force, the course of the subsequent fighting was a foregone conclusion."[319]

This conflict featured the first aerial bombardment in history, conducted by the Royal Air Force (which was formally established after the First World War). By August the parties reached an equitable agreement; the British recognised Afghanistan as having full sovereign rights, and the Afghans recognised the (till then disputed) Durand Line as the border between Afghanistan and British India.[320] Despite military successes, (the Afghan regular army was defeated three times), war-weary Great Britain signed the Treaty of Rawalpindi confirming these points just a few months later in December 1919. The new Afghan leader, Ammanullah, advanced an extensive program of reforms popular among outsiders hoping for a modern nation on India's border. However, these had controversial social and political consequences, especially in Helmand, where weak government control and a growing refugee and settlement program inflamed disputes over land and water access and ownership. These issues

[318] Based on Michael Barthorp, *Afghan Wars and the North-West Frontier, 1839-1947*, 2nd ed. (London: Cassell, 2002). Also, David Loyn, *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement in Afghanistan* (London: Windmill Books, 2008).
[319] Dan Moran, "The Great Game and the Quagmire: Anglo-Soviet Wars in Afghanistan 1838-1989," in *Fighting the Afghanistan War: States, Organizations and Military Adaption*, ed. Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga, James Russell, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, forthcoming), p. 33.
[320] Barthorp, 2002, o*p. cit.*, pp. 149-161. Loyn, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 168-174.

would be influential again during the Soviet post-invasion reforms of the 1980s, and again during the Sangin Accord.

1920-1933: Consolidating independence

Ammanullah's reform program was ambitious. Structural changes to the state were much needed, but the pace of regulation was blistering:

> The constitution of 1923 laid out the structure of government, established executive and legal authority for the Amir, established a Council of Ministers and a State Council to advise it. A new tax law was introduced, and the legal system unified.[321]

Social reforms were also introduced. Some, such as the abolition of slavery, or the expansion of education, brought Afghanistan into line with other international modernising agendas. Others were much more contentious for the Afghans, including: the imposition of conscription, and attempts to curtail to Pashtun customs relating to the treatment of women. While the need for a standing army was clear, the means to pay for it was absent. Though conscription was rational, it was also fiercely resisted – there were rebellions in both Zamindawar in 1923 and the eastern province of Khost the following year. While "public objections to the reforms would be grounded in religious terms (that they were in violation of orthodox Islamic practices), the real problem lay in Ammanullah's attempt to extend central government power in provincial areas in a way that affected people's lives directly."[322] There would continue to be a correlation in the future between the unpalatable speed of reforms and low perceptions of government legitimacy – and violent responses to them – as there had been in previous centuries.

Rulers had used resettlement, and land redistribution, to coerce or encourage policies before – usually in rural areas. For example, the government response to the Alizai rebellion of 1923 was to deport groups of Zamindawaris to Turkistan (corresponding roughly to northern Afghan areas bordering modern-day

[321] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, pp. 182-183.
[322] Ibid., p. 183.

Turkmenistan).[323] Earlier, Amir Abdur Rahman had employed a combination of positive inducements and force, to move Ishaqzai and Noorzai tribesmen from the southern lands granted by Nadir Shah to the north-west of Afghanistan to populate a border region.[324] It was a disaster and many returned, only able to retrieve scattered land holdings in Helmand, on poorer territory. That exodus and return is the foundation of the Ishaqzai tribe's disenfranchisement from government that has continued right up to the present day – they saw it as a fall from their position under Ahmad Shah. Discussions in 2009-10 with Ishaqzai figures frequently recalled their fall from grace: from feared cavalry units in the 18th Century, to farmers mocked as 'cabbage-eaters' in the 21st.[325] These perceptions played a central role in delaying Ishaqzai communities' engagement with the Afghan District Governor's political discussions in the run up to the Sangin Accord.

In Helmand, attempts to improve the irrigation and river network would have far-reaching consequences. "The development of Helmand had begun with the reconstruction of the Saraj canal (the Nahr-e-Saraj, 'waterway of Saraj') in 1910.[326] What was previously desert was populated with non-Helmandi ethnic and tribal groups, including refugees who had recently fled the Soviet revolutions in Central Asia."[327] Human activity that altered the flow of the Helmand River had been the subject of close Persian scrutiny since far earlier times, because of the river's critical impact on the viability of agriculture in Persian territory downstream. In late 1865 the Persian Army marched farther into the Sistan region, and occupied vital land astride the river, just across the border from Helmand, but the British Government stuck to its *laissez-faire* policy. This apparent indifference to local disputes was soon abandoned when, in 1870, "the ruler of Afghanistan threatened to go to war with Iran over

[323] See Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, pp. 26-27. Also Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, pp. 155-157. Caroe refers to Turkistan only (from the Russian perspective) as "beyond the Caspian," Caroe, 1958, o*p. cit.*, p. 317.
[324] Nancy Tapper, "The Advent of Pashtun "Maldars" in North-Western Afghanistan," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 36, no. 1 (1973), pp. 56-68.
[325] Participant observation by the author while in Sangin, August 2009-July 2010.
[326] Richard B. Scott, *Tribal & Ethnic Groups in the Helmand Valley* (Afghanistan Council, Asia Society, 1980), p. 2.
[327] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 27. The experiences of these refugees would affect local responses to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan a generation later.
An excellent collection of original materials has been collected by a retired US aid worker and analyst, and is presented at: Richard B. Scott, "Scott's Helmand Valley Archives," 2014, http://scottshelmandvalleyarchives.org/.

Sistan."[328] This was wrapped up with the contested and undefined Irano-Afghan border, upon which the British were requested to mediate and did so through the Goldsmid Mission of 1870-2.[329] The issue remained unresolved: there were further assessments, such as the Commission on the Sistan Water Question, in 1903. The related frontier problem continued, and – amid memories of British-Russian intrigues fifty years previously – was re-submitted to Turkey, as a "neutral power, " for arbitration in 1934.[330] The Helmand remains officially an International River, not owned by either party (though the law is immature).[331] After a turbulent post-independence period, and a further civil war in 1929 (fomented by reforms and resistance to them), King Zahir Shah came to the throne in 1933. "Profiting by the experience of earlier rulers, who attempted bold changes too quickly, the new king began a program of reform on a modest scale" – agricultural improvements were of prime importance, notably in Helmand.[332] It was into this longer-term historical context that the province's major reconstruction project began in the mid-20th Century.

Costing $130 million between 1946 and 1970: the Helmand-Arghandab Valley Authority (HAVA) was a "massive modernization program that dammed the Helmand River far to the north of Kajaki and dug new irrigation systems along both it and the Arghendab [sic] River in Kandahar."[333] These projects required the massive movement and resettlement of people to prepare the space, and implement the acquisition and redistribution of land from private ownership to government for state-owned construction. Improvements to agriculture, land management, and market access to make the best of the crops were also important objectives. Between 1953 and 1978, just fewer than 10,000 families were settled in the canal zones. Using an average family size for the Province of 9.4, we can estimate that close to 100,000 people

[328] A. H. H. Abidi, "Irano-Afghan Dispute over the Helmand Waters," *International Studies* 16, no. 3 (1977), p. 361. This article sets out the geographical and political antecedents of the problem.
[329] This is discussed further in: Marsden, 2012, o*p. cit.*, pp. 25-26. Abidi, 1977, o*p. cit.*, pp. 360-2.
[330] Abidi, 1977, o*p. cit.*, p. 364.
[331] See Clyde Eagleton, "International Rivers," *The American Journal of International Law* 48, no. 2 (1954), pp. 287-289. Also: Dante A. Caponera, "Conflicts over International River Basins in Africa, the Middle East and Asia," *Review of European Community & International Environmental Law* 5, no. 2 (1996), pp. 97-106.
[332] Mildred Caudill, *Helmand-Arghandab Valley: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (Kabul, Afghanistan: USAID, 1969), p. 9.
[333] Malkasian, 2013, o*p. cit.*, p. 4.

arrived by re-settlement over the 35 year period prior to the Soviet invasion.[334] To allow access for the major construction works, the government moved communities from their ancestral land-holdings, only to move them back later with less land, and now in competition with the new settlers.[335] Farming was also beset with problems, some human, and some geographic or technical: HAVA failed to anticipate that raising the water table would cause excessive water logging; there was inadequate drainage, and farmers did not follow cultivation advice.[336] Previous efforts to expand the road and rail networks had limited impact in Helmand. So, the HAVA project's massive-scale infrastructure improvements represented a new chapter in the history of the province, because for the first time social and political relationships between fringe communities and the state became intimately bound up with the calibre of implementation on highly visible government projects designed to improve the lives of huge numbers of people dependent on agriculture.

1933-1979: Water rights, reforms, and refugees

Demonstrating improvements for local people was vital, given the scale of funds committed. In the early years of Zahir Shah's reign (1933-73), rebuffed by the Americans, "he sought help from Japanese, German, and Italian advisers" since the country had few roads, only six miles of rail, and few internal telegraph or phone lines.[337] Works on the Nahr-e-Bugra canal just north Gereshk got underway in 1936, but with the outbreak of World War Two technicians from these Axis nations were withdrawn. Important irrigation and other infrastructure projects stalled. After the war, the US Government was again asked for aid, but its lack of urgency led the Afghan Government to contract privately with the American firm Morrison Knudsen in 1946.

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[334] Scott, 1980, o*p. cit.* Population influx data, p. 3. Average household size, p. 4.

[335] See Ghulam Farouq, "Socio-Economic Aspects of Land Settlement in Helmand Valley, Afghanistan" (M.Sc. thesis, American University of Beirut, 1975).

[336] For excellent overviews of the technical elements of the HAVA project, see US AID (author undeclared), "Existing HAVA Infrastructure in Helmand," c. 1978, http://scottshelmandvalleyarchives.org/docs/evl-78-12.pdf(accessed 6th August 2014). ; Scott, 1980, o*p. cit*; US Technical Cooperation Service to Afghanistan, *Report on Site Selection for the Permanent Administrative Center of the Helmand Valley Authority* (http://scottshelmandvalleyarchives.org: 1953). See also C. Clapp-Wicek and E. Baldwin, *The Helmand Valley Project in Afghanistan: A.I.D. Evaluation Special Study No. 18* (US Agency for International Development, 1983), pp. 2-7.

[337] Nick Cullather, "Damming Afghanistan: Modernization in a Buffer State," *The Journal of American History* 89, no. 2 (2002), p. 518.

The link between the Helmand River and Iranian human security was again demonstrated in the 1940s when "a critical drought in the summer of 1947 and the initiation of upstream developments precipitated the question anew."[338] As in the modern area, pay for foreign workers (as a proportion of the aid received) was considerable: "the salaries of Morrison Knudsen advisers and technicians absorbed an amount equivalent to Afghanistan's total exports."[339] Despite high expenditure, technical problems remained, compounded by cultural ones:

> "To save money, the Afghan Government had agreed to do administrative and drainage work that they were not technically competent to do [while] the Americans had trouble recruiting employees who understood the language and culture of Helmand."[340]

The foundations for modern mistrust in foreign assistance were laid here, and resurfaced during the Sangin Accord – undermining the formation of a Way Out.

By the early 1960s, the US Government became more directly involved. By 1964, the Helmand Arghandab Valley Authority program posed significant administrative challenges due its scale, and its impact on the national economy was profound. "The monarchy poured money into the project; a fifth of the central government's total expenditures went into HAVA in the 1950s and early 1960s."[341] It was clear that structural changes were required to develop the Afghan state's capacity to administer the HAVA developments; some social and political alterations were also proposed, as with both past and future reform and modernisation attempts.[342] What followed was a series of rapid alterations to the internal characteristics of the state. In traditional Afghan lore, the south of Afghanistan remained Zamindawar: the name preceded Ahmad Shah Durrani's break from Persian overlordship in 1747. In 1960, the

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[338] Helmand River Delta Commission, *Report of the Helmand River Delta Commission: Iran and Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C., 1951), p. 2.

[339] Cullather, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 525. For criticism of salaries paid to foreign workers in the 21st Century, see for example: Richard Norton-Taylor, "40% of Afghan Aid Returns to Donor Countries, Says Report," The Guardian (Online), 2008, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/25/afghanistan.internationalaidanddevelopment1(accessed 3rd August 2014). Original report: Matt Waldman, *Falling Short: Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan* (Reliefweb.int, 2008).

[340] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 28.

[341] Cullather, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 525.

[342] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, pp. 200-225, especially 'Social and Economic Changes' (pp. 200-205) and 'Local Governance' (pp. 220-223). For a brief summary of the program from 1946-1979, including some very interesting photos and State Department correspondence, see:

new province of Gereshk was created; just the latest recognition of the importance of that vital ground astride the Helmand River crossing, which stretched back centuries.[343] Four years later, in 1964, and under US encouragement, the capital moved to Lashkar Gah to co-locate the political centre with the HAVA project administration there. Helmand replaced Gereshk as the provincial name, adopting a political significance nationally for the first time.[344] By the 1970s, this fusion would be complete: the president of HAVA was also the Helmand Provincial Governor[345] operating from the new site built on the Lashkari Bazaar.[346] This returned the centre of power in the area almost exactly to Qala-i-Bost (now, just Bost), established by the Persian Ghaznavids as their winter capital in 976 AD, 988 years earlier. These changes also had political and social implications for local communities that would affect conflict dynamics in the case study.

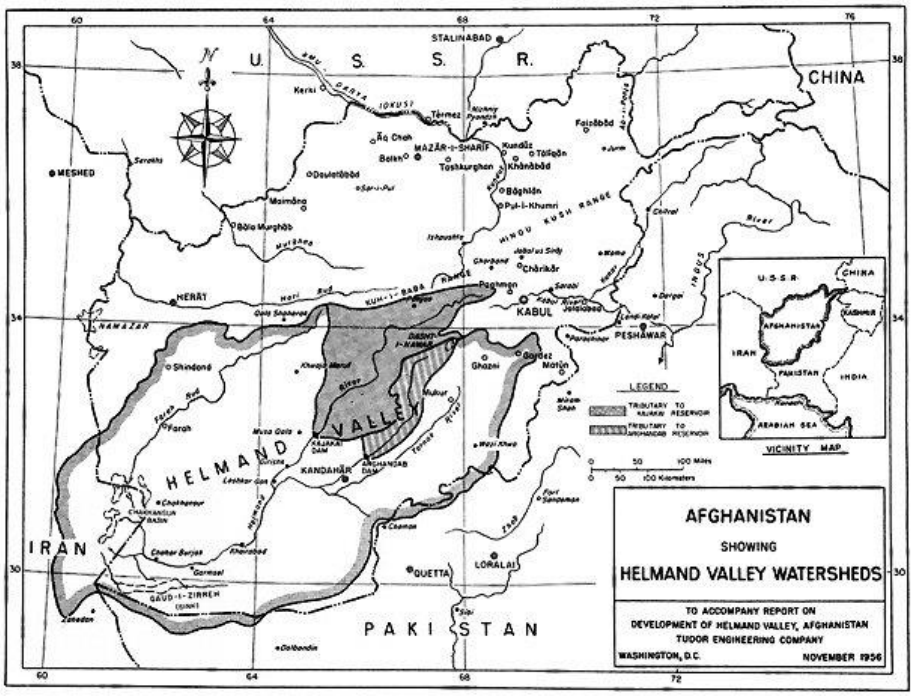

Figure 15: The Helmand Valley as an economic buffer zone (Reprinted from Report on Development of Helmand Valley, Afghanistan, 1956).[347]

[343] Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, 6 vols., vol. 2 (Akad. Dr.-und Verlag-Anst., 1985), p. 1.

[344] US Technical Cooperation Service to Afghanistan, 1953, o*p. cit.* The importance of Gereshk was recognised but the large space required for HAVA made the land acquisition bill too expensive (p. 10). Lashkar Gah (referred to as Lashkari Bazaar) was near to the "geographical center of the administrative jurisdiction" (p. 3) and near the east-west road to Qandahar (p. 4).

[345] Richard Scott, quoted in Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 31.

[346] US Technical Cooperation Service to Afghanistan, 1953, o*p. cit.*, p. 15.

[347] Reproduced in Cullather, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 516.

"Stretching across the southern half of Afghanistan, the Helmand Valley development was designed by the US Government to act as an economic buffer, shielding the US 'northern tier' allies Pakistan and Iran from Soviet influence."[348]

> While "Britain's solution to Afghanistan's tribal wars had been to script feuds of blood, honor, and faith within the linear logic of boundary commissions the United States replotted tribal enmities on hydrological charts. Resolution became a matter of apportioning cubic yards of water and kilowatt-hours of energy."[349]

Then, as now, it was perhaps unrealistic to consider the security and effectiveness of infrastructure and water initiatives as distinct from the social and political situation in Helmand. In Garmser District: "the great canal project brought jobs, a new district center, a new bazaar, and the promise of thousands of hectares of irrigable land. The government set up eleven schools and staffed them with educated teachers. Net farm income per person rose from $126 per year in 1963 to $1,280 in 1973."[350] There were however consequences for social cohesion. "Each extension of the project required more land acquisition and displaced more people. To remain flexible, the royal government and Morrison Knudsen kept the question of who actually owned the land in abeyance."[351] The quantities of land requisitioned, combined with forced settlement of communities from outside Helmand, altered the tribal tapestry and social hierarchy laid down centuries before through land grants made in the 18th Century, and given great resonance by their perceived association with the father of the nation, Ahmad Shah Durrani. There were further re-allocations, but the creation of the HAVA in 1952 alone required the removal of some 1,800 square miles of territory from local control.[352] The resettlement program attempted, by stealth, to "disempower tribal groups that had caused problems in the past."[353] The case study suggests this narrative remained prevalent 60 years later, with future infrastructure works resisted violently by some communities.

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[348] Ibid.
[349] Ibid., p. 524.
[350] Malkasian, 2013, o*p. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
[351] Cullather, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 525.
[352] Ibid., p. 524.
[353] The Orkand Corporation, *Afghanistan: The Southern Provinces* (Silver Spring, Maryland: 1989), p. 36.

The 1964 Constitution also perpetuated the long-standing policy by Kabul of diminishing regional power bases through sub-division: administrative alterations fragmented Helmand from four districts (bounding roughly balancing local power blocs), to thirteen. Each was given an 'order,' meaning status, which dictated the level of staff, budget, and services they could draw from central government.[354] The historically powerful region of Zamindawar, for example, was fractured into the low order (and therefore lowly resourced) districts of Kajaki, Musa Qala, and Bagran. These developments may have been conscious efforts to "transition from a political universe based on indigenous and Islamic norms of order to one increasingly defined by European norms of statehood."[355] They also inflamed residual narratives about the perfidy of central government that resonated with tales of previous predatory, un-Islamic, or incompetent rulers. Combined with the lack of irrigation improvements north of Gereshk, these government-driven changes established new grievances (or inflamed old ones), over land, water, and social reform, and undermined the government's capacity to act – if it chose to do so – as an honest broker of solutions, especially in rural areas.[356] The motivations behind foreign aid, given the HAVA project's implementation problems, remained questioned. Within Helmand, successive programs of government-sponsored changes were undermined by their social consequences. For example, by creating an educated cadre to run the canal project from within Helmandi society, the conservative-reformist divide first crafted in the 1920s was exacerbated.[357] Reaction to these factors would feature heavily in the fighting against the Soviet invasion and contribute to the fragmentation of the state in the civil war that followed. Later, in the Sangin Accord, these Soviet-trained administrators would feature heavily, both as government officials, and as their Taliban negotiating partners identified for political co-option.

The conduct of the Communist government, and the Soviet forces that followed, would test 19th Century British envoy Alexander Burnes' conclusion that for

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[354] For the earlier historical basis see Adamec, 1985, o*p. cit.* For details and characteristics of Helmand's districts in the 1970s see Scott, 1980, o*p. cit.*

[355] Marsden, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 47.

[356] See for example US AID (author undeclared), c. 1978, o*p. cit.*, http://scottshelmandvalleyarchives.org/docs/evl-78-12.pdf. Page 1 shows that no HAVA irrigation improvements existed in the upper Gereshk valley or in Sangin and Kajaki.

[357] Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 36.

the Afghans "to be happy under government they must either be ruled by a vigorous despot, or formed into many small republics."[358] There would be one critical difference – in the past, once sources of foreign plunder dried up, factions looked to central government or outsiders for funding incentives or subsidies. In the coming wars, a new source of revenue would fundamentally alter Afghanistan's political landscape: the opium poppy. This represented a major change for the generation who came to maturity in this time, who for the first time had a lucrative domestic revenue source as an alternative to foreign funding, or cross-border plundering.

The legacy of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan

The Communist governments of Nur Taraki (1978-9), Hafizullah Amin (1979) and Babrak Karmal (1979-86) arose from left wing political groups started some twenty years earlier. King Zahir Shah's increasingly open stance on democratic participation eventually opened the door for a Communist alliance to win election in the 1960s.[359] For a while, a constitutional monarchy prevailed, but Mohammad Daoud deposed his cousin the King in 1973 (who was in Europe for an eye operation), declaring himself the first President of Afghanistan.[360] President Daoud "defiantly rejected any imported ideology [i.e. Communism]" which posed a problem for the left-wing political groups.[361] Climate was again a contributing factor in political unrest: Zahir Shah failed to act decisively after a devastating drought scorched the countryside from 1969-72, further undermined by declining US and Soviet economic aid.[362] Drought, and then floods, would also be precursors to the Sangin Accord in 2011 and factors in the decision to negotiate and the enhanced value of additions to Ripeness theory for explaining the case study.

Afghan communism had two principal wings: the *Khalq* faction (named after the original PDPA's newspaper styled on Communist Russia's *Pravda*) and *Parcham*

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[358] Dalrymple, 2013, o*p. cit.*, p. 59.
[359] Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghan Communism and Soviet Intervention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 7.
[360] Tomsen, 2011, o*p. cit.* (On Daoud and Pakistan see pp. 93-96. On the Constitution, p. 98. On the coup, p. 105).
[361] Bradsher, 1999, o*p. cit.*, p. 16.
[362] Tomsen, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 104.

[meaning Flag, or Banner].[363] Broadly, Khalq drew their support from the countryside and the Pushtun tribes, while Parcham represented the urban intellectuals.[364] Once in power, the Communists adopted programs of rapid socialist reform, modelled on the Soviet experience. They included land redistribution, secularisation, and other changes that, as "an attempt to modernize and bring under firm state control the disparate ethnic and tribal groupings, ran counter to everything the traditional and independent Islamic Afghan village stood for."[365] The reforms were broad, and immediate. For example, Decree 6 (August 1978) did away with the mortgage system, and money-lending – all debts over five years old were cancelled – while Decree 8 confiscated all land holdings greater than 30 *jeribs*.[366] This liquidated the redistributions enforced during the HAVA project, adding an additional layer of grievance against foreign-backed government reform programs.

The Communist reforms inflamed a number of unstable dynamics, simultaneously. The traditional way of life was challenged by modernisation. The urban was favoured over the rural, and the secular promoted above the religious. There was an almost instantaneous response: "A resistance movement started within a month of the coup. It was backed by most of the country's 320,000 mullahs."[367] Daoud's administration also had to contend with the Islamic [alternatively labelled Islamist] political factions. They "had sought in religion both a barrier and an answer to alien [Communist, foreign] thoughts" and he considered them the main threat to his modernisation program.[368] Alongside internal power struggles, Afghanistan's foreign policy balanced the demands of her immediate neighbours and those of external powers such as the United States, Germany, and Great Britain.[369] The United States

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[363] See also Bruce Riedel, *What We Won: America's Secret War in Afghanistan, 1979–89* (Brookings Institution Press, 2014), chapter 1, pp. 14-18.

[364] Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-1989* (London: Profile Books, 2012), pp. 38-9. See also the future Afghan President's Masters dissertation, Hamed Karzai, "Attitude of the Leadership of Afghan Tribes Towards the Regime from 1953 to 1978," *Central Asian Survey* vol. 7, no. 2-3 (1988), pp. 38-39.

[365] Roger R. Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 164.

[366] Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 86. 30 *jerib* (the jerib being an Afghan unit of land area), equates to roughly 60km^2.

[367] Brian Moynahan, *The Claws of the Bear: A History of the Soviet Armed Forces from 1917 to the Present* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), p. 312.

[368] Bradsher, 1999, o*p. cit.*, p. 6, p. 17.

[369] Lester W. Grau and Michael A. Gress, eds., *The Russian General Staff: The Soviet-Afghan War, How a Superpower Fought and Lost,* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), p. xxii.

had for example decided to arm Pakistan, as anti-Communist ally, since the 1950s, forcing Afghanistan to divert trade northwards through Russia. Tensions were already high over suspicions that Kabul's sought to unite Pashtun communities spanning the Afghan-Pakistan border, referred to as Pushtunistan.[370] Within Afghanistan, some tentatively welcomed the arrival of some 5,000 Soviet soldiers when the invasion began in 1979, but a prescient Soviet Embassy contact was reported to have said, "We are glad to see you. But you will be very well advised to leave again as soon as you can."[371] The Soviets had no intention of leaving. A military relationship stretching back over twenty years underpinned the coup, based on the 1956 agreement that "began the orientation of the Afghan army and air force to Soviet ways. Their technical language became Russian."[372] Continuing a long-standing theme in Afghan history, the Soviets backed a political regime they favoured, and then sent in military forces to support it, as the British had done before and NATO would do afterwards. Local community stances to the foreigners would form a fundamental influence on identity and engagement with government, with legacies for the Sangin Accord.

The Soviet forces faced a considerable challenge. "To win the xenophobic hearts and Moslem minds of these thin, tattered people was the precondition of quick success. Neither the ideologue Karmal [President 1979-86] nor the Red army came close to it."[373] Resistance tactics developed in the face of overwhelming Soviet air power, and were re-learnt after NATO's intervention. Drainage ditches, high walled compounds, and "scores of escape tunnels built in the 1980s" offered protection from air bombardment and reconnaissance.[374] The Soviets committed significant forces to the effort: over the course of the campaign, over 525,500 officers, sergeants, soldiers, workers, and support staff served there – one in 12 would be killed, wounded or missing in action.[375] The Soviet bombing campaigns triggered mass movements of

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[370] Bradsher, 1999, o*p. cit.*, p. 1. On Pushtunistan [alt. Pashtunistan] see Louis Dupree, *"Pushtunistan": The Problem and Its Larger Implications* (American Universities Field Staff, 1961). Faridullah Bezhan, "The Pashtunistan Issue and Politics in Afghanistan, 1947–1952," *The Middle East Journal* 68, no. 2 (2014).

[371] Braithwaite, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 108.

[372] Bradsher, 1999, o*p. cit.*, p. 2.

[373] Moynahan, 1989, o*p. cit.*, p. 315.

[374] Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop* (London: Hurst and Company, 2007), p. 125.

[375] Calculated from data provided in Grau and Gress, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 309. (As of February 1989, 13,833 killed, 49,985 wounded, 311 missing in action, from 525,500 who served).

people to safer areas, some into Iran, and others southwards into Pakistan where displaced people lived in camps in the northern territories. By 15th February 1989, the number of displaced had risen to a staggering 6.2 million, split almost equally between the two countries.[376] These encampments would become the political base and centre of military recruitment for the mujahidin, formed around the seven resistance parties.[377] Helmand Province had links to these political movements – there were at least 80 active movement corridors back in to Afghanistan – and so it is possible to place the resistance in the south, and in specific districts such as Sangin and Garmser, into a wider social, political and geographical context. Features of this conflict persisted in later interventions, notably the importance of cross-border political and logistical links.[378]

Helmand was not a priority for the Soviets. Troop deployments were low; there was only one brigade (with four battalions) – roughly 2,500 to 3,000 soldiers – for all of Helmand and neighbouring Farah provinces.[379] Given the peak annual troop level nationally was around 130,000 (in 1985-6), and there are 34 provinces, using today's population and area data this equates roughly to 2% of the deployed Soviet force to cover Helmand, which consisted of 7.9% of the people and 16.5% of the national territory.[380] During participant observation by the author in 2009, residents of the Helmand Valley south of Sangin, predominantly Ishaqzai tribesfolk, were labelled collaborators since the Soviets are alleged to have conquered and held that territory and enlisted (or conscripted) locals into security forces and the political administration. Conversely, fighting in north Helmand was particularly tough. Soviet soldiers carried up to 6 days supplies (often 40kg or more per man), staying in the field with one litre of

[376] UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), "Briefing Notes: Afghanistan 10 Years after Soviet Pull-Out," 1999, http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=3ae6b81cf0&query=Return%20to%20Afghanistan(accessed 10th February 2015).

[377] For an accessible overview of this incredibly complex history see Shah M Tarzi, "Politics of the Afghan Resistance Movement: Cleavages, Disunity, and Fragmentation," *Asian Survey*, (1991).

[378] Grau and Gress, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 131. 30 of these movement corridors were particularly active.

[379] Malkasian, 2013, o*p. cit.*, p. 26.

[380] Calculated using data from the Afghanistan Government's Central Statistics Organisation, aggregated together at Wikipedia, Provinces of Afghanistan (2015). Helmand (2010 population 1,441,769, and area 58,584km^2) added to Farah (2010 population 493,007 and area 48,471km^2) together contain 1,934,776 of the national population of 24,325,142 and constitute 107,055km^2 of the total area: 647,164km^2.

water per man per day.[381] Sangin town contains the wreckage of Soviet tanks where largely Alikozai tribal resistance fighters apparently stopped ground forces. Years later, these same men recounted proudly that no Soviet force ever held the Upper Sangin Valley, resorting instead to strafing villages with helicopters.[382] Those who resisted drew great acclaim, perceiving this as a "battle for national dignity and national liberation in which they were prepared – literally – to fight to the death."[383] This prestige would provide a legitimacy narrative present and influential during the Sangin Accord negotiations.

In north Helmand, rival groups struggled for financial, military, and political autonomy, often using changes of allegiance to maximise access to the money flowing through the seven resistance parties in Pakistan. The strong association between opium poppy cultivation, resistance, and religion stems from this period; Mullah Nasim Akhundzada (uncle to the future Provincial Governor of Helmand, Sher Mohammad Akhundzada) issued a religious *fatwa* [a considered religious opinion, often believed a command] in 1981 demanding, opium "poppy must cultivated in order to finance the *jihad* against the Soviets and the Kabuli lackeys."[384] It was also sensible economics in an area without banks, for leaders seeking self-reliance. Opium is a hardy crop, with a relatively stable value: the dried pods can be stored for years without significant loss of quality, and a significant profit can be made between the farmers' crop and the refined product. For the farmer, let alone the trafficker (whose incomes are significantly higher), "it plays a multi-functional role in the livelihood strategies of the poor, providing access to land, credit, and an important off-farm income."[385]

The year 1985 saw a change of leadership in the Soviet Union, and Mikhail Gorbachev took power as General Secretary of the Communist Party. The Soviet military – then at its highest troop concentration – was given one year to 'solve' the

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[381] Grau and Gress, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 287.

[382] PRT officials who served in Sangin recall a group of local Alikozai elders recounting this story, and re-enacting the operation of mujahidin anti-aircraft gun positions, during a shura (meeting) in 2009.

[383] Braithwaite, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 331.

[384] Alain Labrousse, "Les Drogues Et Les Conflicts En Afghanistan 1978-1995," *Afghanistan Info* no. 38, (1996), p. 16.

[385] David Mansfield, "Opium Cultivation in Afghanistan - the Economic Superiority of Illicit Drug Production: Myth and Reality," 2001, http://scottshelmandvalleyarchives.org/docs/nar-01-02.pdf(accessed 13th February 2015). p. 16.

war.[386] In Helmand, Soviet and Afghan forces conducted a massive offensive, supported by softer actions such as political work, and religious, female, and medical engagement.[387] It was not enough, and in May 1986, Karmal was ousted and replaced as Afghan President by Major General Mohammad Najibullah – a former director of the KHAD secret police – an organisation in which widespread and systematic torture were commonplace."[388] Soviet efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, and their forces withdrew on 15th February 1989, in line with an agreement struck in Geneva. Average losses were 126 killed and 4,240 sick and wounded per month, peaking at 144 killed per month for the 62 months in Stage II of the war (March 1980-April 1985).[389] This indicates intense combat, but disease had a far bigger impact. Official figures report that "irrecoverable personnel (killed, died of wounds or disease, and in accidents or other incidents) came to 14,453" while "53,753 were wounded or injured, and 415,932 fell sick."[390]

Amidst debate about the use of military tactics, the correct approach to working alongside Afghan forces, or equipment suitability, two points remain as relevant today as they were for the Soviets, and their antecedents: the terrain, and the unity that many – in Afghanistan, and elsewhere – find only in the face of an external threat. "When in early 1980 the Soviet deputy foreign minister pointed out to his boss, Andrei Gromyko, that three previous invasions by the British had failed, Gromyko asked sternly: "Are you comparing our internationalist forces to those of the British imperialists?" "No, sir, of course not," answered his deputy. "But the mountains are the same."[391] To many outside observers, notably the USA, the breakdown of the Soviet Union itself, and then the end of the Communist government in 1992, signalled the effective end of the Cold War. It was exactly the wrong moment for the world to take its collective eyes away from events in Afghanistan.

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[386] Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 2nd ed. (USA: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 146.
[387] Antonio Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan, 1978-1992* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2000), p. 42.
[388] Moynahan, 1989, o*p. cit.*, p. 318.
[389] See table 110 'Losses by Phase of the War' in Grau and Gress, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 289.
[390] Colonel-General G.F. Krivosheev, ed. *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the 20th Century* (London: Greenhill Books, 1993), pp. 286-7.
[391] Mark Franchetti, "Can the West Avoid Russia's Fate in Afghanistan?," 3rd January 2010, http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/world_news/article194008.ece(accessed 11th February 2015). This is a subscription only service.

Dr. Najibullah's ascension to leadership after the Soviet departure heralded a dramatic shift in aspiration for reform, and a switch to a more collaborative approach between urban and rural populations, and conservative and progressive elements. The Soviet leadership told him to "forget Communism, abandon socialism, embrace Islam, and work with the tribes."[392] For a while, the approach appeared successful. Afghan Government professional military forces were considerable, augmented by auxiliaries paid for by Najibullah's former department; the KHAD secret service had financed the creation of militias drawn from the former mujahidin – up to 300,000 personnel were available to the government in 1988, including up to 100,000 militia.[393]This strategy also had similarities with Persian, India and British approaches in previous centuries, and would be evolved by NATO at times during its campaign.

Najibullah's administration was contested, however, by a coalition of ethnicities (see Annex E). Ethnicity in Afghanistan had importance correlations for the power balance, and it affected the geography of political alliances, and had implications for the route any aspirant took to reach the national capital. Led principally by Ahmad Shad Masood,[394] a Tajik mujahidin leader, and Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek leader, the Northern Alliance formed in early 1992 to overturn Afghanistan's post-Soviet Communist government.[395] Of particular note, Masood was perceived as the only resistance leader who never left the country to live abroad; he was widely read, and his army fought back nine major offensives by the Soviet army in the Panjshir Valley.[396] He was admired by the Soviets – who were unable to inflict a decisive defeat upon him – and he showed the ability to master Western-style conventional logistics, intelligence gathering, and command and control of at least 20,000 soldiers.[397] Dostum (today Vice-President, under President Ashraf Ghani) was originally a General in the Communist government's army, but left after the Soviet

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[392] Sherard Cowper-Coles, *Cables from Kabul: The inside Story of the West's Afghanistan Campaign* (London: Harper Press, 2011), p. 56.
[393] Braithwaite, 2012, o*p. cit.*
[394] For general background on Masood see Kate Clark, "Profile: The Lion of Panjshir," 10th September 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1535249.stm.
[395] Nasreen Ghufran, "The Taliban and the Civil War Entanglement in Afghanistan," *Asian Survey* vol. 41, no. 3 (2001), p. 466.
[396] John Blake, "He Would Have Found Bin Laden," 27th May 2009, http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/05/27/massoud.afghanistan/(accessed 12th February 2015).
[397] Braithwaite, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 184, p. 216, p. 299.

withdrawal.[398] His 20,000 Uzbek militiamen had been vital to Najibullah's government, and his departure played a critical role in its fall.[399]

Najibullah's strategy had depended on the redistribution of Soviet aid, but this declined significantly after the attempted coup against Soviet President Gorbachev in August 1991, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December that year.[400] The consequences were disastrous: no government in Kabul in the last 250 years had survived without massive external subsidy, and Najibullah's was no different.[401] He was unable to pay his civil and military supporters, and the country lacked enough food and fuel for the harsh winter.[402] Since the 14th April 1988, the United Nations had formally been the umbrella for joint US-Russian-Pakistan discussions with Kabul's leaders about 'the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan', but this played out largely in the wider context and ideology of the Cold War rather than addressing issues inside the country – the mujahidin were absent from the discussions, for example.[403] The Communist government effectively collapsed, and in spring 1992, Najibullah was detained by the mujahidin leadership who rushed to occupy the capital, and fill the power vacuum – led by the ethnic Tajik Mullah Burhanuddin Rabbani (the future leader of the President Karzai's High Peace Council, who himself would be killed by the Taliban in 2011).[404]

The collapse of the Communist government triggered a race to the capital, with Masood arriving just one day before Hekmatyar. The capital was then under near constant bombardment. In the first 24 hours, 3,000 civilians died in the first 24-hours,

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[398] Office of the President: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai Sworn in as President Elect and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah as Chief Executive," 29th September 2014, http://president.gov.af/en/news/36950(accessed 12th February 2015).

[399] Roy Gutman, *How We Missed the Story: Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Hijacking of Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2008), p. 33. ibid.

[400] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 284.

[401] Cowper-Coles, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 57.

[402] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 248. The Soviets had promised 230,000 tonnes of food in 1991 but by October had delivered only 50% of that amount, and only 10% of the promised fuel.

[403] United Nations, "Afghanistan and the United Nations," 2015, http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/un-afghan-history.shtml(accessed 12th February 2015). See also Braithwaite, 2012, o*p. cit.*, pp. 279-82.

[404] BBC, "Afghan Peace Council Head Rabbani Killed in Attack," 20th November 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-14985779(accessed 13th February 2015).

and 700,000 were displaced.[405] Rocket and artillery exchanges continued for 46 of the following 58 months, as the factions fought for control. While he has Prime Minister, Hekmatyar fought openly with Masood, the Defence Minister. Dostum, a hard-drinking Soviet-trained general, swapped sides repeatedly in unlikely alliances of convenience with staunch Islamist conservatives.[406] This pattern continued as the Taliban, backed by direct military aid, and advisors from Pakistan took control in Kandahar in 1994 and over the next two years consolidated, and advanced upon Kabul; they fired 287 rockets into the city in January 1996 alone.[407] A unified response to this new threat might have been decisive, but the success of any one region's leader against Omar's Taliban forces – such as Masood's ally Ismael Khan in the western city of Herat – "generated more jealousy than support from rivals elsewhere."[408] By then "Kabul had been without electricity for three years and its 1.2 million residents fed only because of United Nations World Food Programme convoys and an emergency Red Cross airlift."[409] The UN Security Council condemned the situation, on 15th February 1996, but Afghans – especially in the Pashtun south – would increasingly look to the Taliban for change.[410]

The early decades of an independent Afghanistan were typified by turbulence, within the national borders and the wider region. Efforts to establish a national identity – either by Afghans or sponsored by foreign interveners – evolved the legacy of older history, leaving a range of motivations and perceptions important for the Sangin Accord. First, few reforms had universal appeal, and most would be resisted by certain sections of the population – especially those perceived to strike at the traditional rural lifestyle. Reforms sponsored by foreign ideologies or interveners rarely stuck (though the money that often accompanied them was accepted). Resistance to outside influence was a unifying force, and increasingly framed as an

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[405] Shah M. Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature," *Asian Survey* vol. 33, no. 2 (1993), p. 165.

[406] For the length of the siege, see Gutman, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 50. For details of the dispute see Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 250-1.

[407] Gutman, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 76.

[408] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 259.

[409] Gutman, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 76.

[410] United Nations, "3631st Meeting: Statement by the President of the Security Council," United Nations, 1996, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Afgh%20SPRST1996%206.pdf(accessed 14th February 2015).

Islamic duty. These narratives are retained from previous centuries, and indicate a continuity of approach which undermines explanations of a Way Out and (under additions to Ripeness) generates Hurt on the level of government capacity and legitimacy. Major infrastructure projects were seen to fracture the power balance, disenfranchising and enriching specific groups well before the long-term benefits to quality of life were realised. The partially finished HAVA project in Helmand exemplifies these mixed outcomes, and would remain a stark reminder of the risks and benefits for rural communities associated with promises of foreign aid – and of engagement with the central authorities in Kabul. The case study suggests a recent catastrophe (a failed uprising in 2007) and a shock (from significant flooding) played a role in overcoming these entrenched attitudes, allowing infrastructure improvements to feature in the Sangin Accord. Both are supporting, but not essential, elements related to Ripeness theory.

The two most significant legacies of the 20th Century for the Sangin Accord and other local negotiations were: the rise of the opium industry and; the volume of evidence showing that power brokers associated with Kabul cared more for their rivalries than the welfare of their population. The legacy of history played a part in the latter case; in 1776 AD Timur Shah had deliberately moved the capital from Kandahar in the Pashtun lands to its present site specifically so it sat astride the fault lines between Afghanistan's ancient ethnic groups, rather than wholly within one of them. Events immediately preceding the Taliban Government of the 1990s deeply affected perceptions of government legitimacy henceforth: "opportunism could always be counted on to undermine any other "–ism" (Islamism, nationalism, socialism, etc.).[411] The conduct and failings of the Mujahidin government were directly responsible for the Taliban's increasing legitimacy and their unwillingness to enter a power-sharing arrangement in the 1990s. The rise of a functioning narcotics industry, initially in response to the Soviet invasion, created a rival income source to outside aid. This is specific to this period of history. Alongside increasingly partisan divisions (adding religious fundamentalism and Communist ideological labels to older tribal and ethnic ones) perpetuated the bypassing of central authorities. External backers would now deal directly with competing groups to foster their particular agendas. The review of

[411] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 253.

history here, and its impact on the case study, supports Rubin's categorisation of this as "rentier-state wrecking" which "blocked the people of Afghanistan from choosing among the competing political elites and rebuilding their country."[412] This could be expressed as a stalemated political position. While the views of ordinary people are excluded from Zartman's original theory, the case study shows the importance of community pressure – and aspiration – especially on the Taliban's decision to negotiate in Sangin, explained more effectively by additions to Ripeness.

[412] Rubin, 1992, o*p. cit.*

CHAPTER 4: MODERN PRECURSORS TO THE SANGIN ACCORD

1994-2001: The rise of the Taliban

The Taliban's roots trace back at least as far as 1981, under Mullah Mansur, whose objective was "to initiate a political-jihad movement especially for Afghan Shariat (Islamic Law) students"[413] – and credible research suggests there were Taliban fronts during the war with the Soviets.[414] Earlier, in spring 1994, future President Hamid Karzai himself urged the US consul general in Peshawar to support the Taliban, who were "going to bring peace and security to the country" and at that stage were operating around Kandahar (Karzai's family home city) "cleaning up all the roadblocks" so renowned for widespread theft, violence, and rape.[415] Positive perceptions of the group's intent created a foundation for fostering legitimacy in the eyes of some communities, even if their methods were rooted in strict interpretations of Islam. Explanations of the Sangin Accord grounded in Ripeness theory suggest this favourable comparison with the weak performance of the state central government would undermine any Way Out, until significant improvements in capacity and conduct were observed. Inside Afghanistan the emergence of the Taliban movement was viewed with little concern – it was just the latest in a long line of mujahidin organisations formed across the border in Pakistan's refugee-clogged border areas. Akin with Hekmatyar's own beginnings, it was also a smaller-scale grouping with no geographical base inside Afghanistan. These disparate linkages, spanning district, province and national boundaries, provide further evidence that analysis of the conflict parties in the Sangin Accord is problematic. Approaches that assume all political actors involved in perceiving Ripeness were based locally are also unrealistic.

Initially at least, Omar's band also compared poorly in strength and reach with all the factions he was to vie with, and oust. Hekmatyar had failed to wrest any

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[413] Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* (C. Hurst, Publishers, Limited, 2014), p. 46; the full story is superbly explained between pp. 46-63. For more on the evolving definition of jihad, and its co-option by extremists, see Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (IB Tauris, 2006), especially pp. ix-xiii, and chapter 13: Osama bin Laden and the War against the West.

[414] Farrell, forthcoming, o*p. cit.*, chapter 1, pp. 22-23 within that chapter, in the pre-publication version seen by the author of this thesis. This draws upon Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban/Al-Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan, 1970-2010* (London: Hurst, 2012).

[415] Gutman, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 63-4.

meaningful control with far greater support and resources at his disposal than Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader, had at his in 1994. The more established factions misjudged the population's weariness with the fight for Kabul, the strength Omar would gain from limited yet decisive action, and the power of Islamist religious fervour. Nevertheless, by the time the Taliban leadership crossed the border from Pakistan in spring 1994, with genuine intent to stake a claim in first Kandahar, then for all of Afghanistan, Rabbani's government and most of the country's elites had one glaring shortfall compared to Omar: perceived legitimacy, especially among the southern population. Omar was admired by the Taliban's supporters for three reasons: his religious piety, his reputation for incorruptibility, and his bravery in the jihad.[416] Masood, Rabbani and other notables had varying levels of credibility themselves, as mujahidin and as long-standing adherents to Islamic practice in the face of Communist secularism. Masood's record against the Soviets in particular, was virtually unimpeachable. However, their administration, and the conduct of the elites they were generically (or directly) associated with, had – for close to a decade – displayed enormous shortcoming. Even accounting for the unique challenges triggered by the near-collapse of the state after the Soviets withdrew aid, previously "corruption was so rampant that the government bureaucracy absorbed 85 to 90 percent of Soviet aid intended for the whole population," and much of this was diverted to fund factional struggles for power.[417]

In September 1996 the Taliban, who shared deeper bonds of ethnicity and outlook among their fellow Pashtuns, advanced on Kabul in strength. The wily Masood withdrew in good order from the capital to his Panjshir valley bastion, inflicting heavy casualties upon his Taliban pursuers during a slick but punishing fighting retreat.[418] Deposed leader President Najibullah refused to leave, confident he was under United Nations protection and safe because (by his reading of the CIA's mujahidin support

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[416] Renowned US negotiator Richard Holbrooke called Omar "a driving, inspirational force" – see Steve Coll, "Looking for Mullah Omar," 23rd January 2012, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/01/23/looking-for-mullah-omar(accessed 12th February 2015).

[417] Barfield, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 248.

[418] New York Times, "Islamic Rebels Pursue Retreating Afghan Army," 29th September 1996, http://www.nytimes.com/1996/09/29/world/islamic-rebels-pursue-retreating-afghan-army.html(accessed 14th February 2015). Braithwaite, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 303. Also Gutman, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 78-9.

activities) the Taliban were backed by the United States and so would not harm him. Taliban forces moved into Kabul unopposed on 27th September 1996, and Najibullah's body was discovered hanging from a lamppost, mouth stuffed with banknotes, that morning.[419] Mullah Omar was now the *de facto* head of government in Kabul. His challenge would be to extend control into the north – bastions of other ethnicities, protected by Masood and his veterans of the anti-Soviet campaign – and extend influence from the Taliban's foothold in Kandahar across the Pashtun south. To do this he needed funds, and he would rely heavily upon faith and fear. A man, who had arrived five months earlier, virtually unnoticed amid the utter turmoil, would bolster all three. In May 1996, Osama bin Laden arrived with 90 friends and family seeking permanent sanctuary after his expulsion from Sudan; that government declared him no longer welcome as a direct result of the threat al-Qaeda posed to American Embassy staff in Khartoum.[420] The threat bin Laden posed in Afghanistan's Tora Bora mountains, alongside Mullah Omar and the Taliban, would be far more significant.

Osama bin Laden's arrival in Afghanistan in 1996 was the direct result of American and Saudi Arabian pressure on the government in Sudan, designed to keep him on the run, rather than capture him.[421] It appears that the US authorities accepted that Afghanistan was the most likely destination but did not consider his co-location with Mullah Omar and the Taliban a significant risk; they were concerned only that he did not go to Somalia.[422] Initially, bin Laden set up operations in the eastern city of Jalalabad, assessed by the US 9/11 Commission to be "because it was in an area controlled by a provincial council of Islamic leaders who were not major contenders for national power," perhaps indicating that he sought independence of action. Rather than being solely associated with the Taliban, he hedged his bets, also striking up an early relationship with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (a staunch opponent of the Taliban

[419] Terence White, "Flashback: When the Taleban Took Kabul," 15th October 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1600136.stm(accessed 14th February 2015). Also Braithwaite, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 303.

[420] US Council on Foreign Relations, "Backgrounder - Profile: Osama Bin Laden," 1st September 2007, http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-leaders/profile-osama-bin-laden/p9951(accessed 15th February 2015). . Gutman, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 91-2. Also

[421] US Council on Foreign Relations, 1st September 2007, o*p. cit.*, http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-leaders/profile-osama-bin-laden/p9951.

[422] This was the conclusion of meetings between the US Ambassador and the Sudanese Foreign Minister in February and then bilateral talks in March 2006. Gutman, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 90.

movement), and maintaining links with the powerful Haqqani family.[423] The area was well-chosen, being a short distance from the border with Pakistan, and near the route from the Khyber Pass to Kabul. It was also a safe haven, and it was here that bin Laden built his austere, fortified mountain bunker in the hinterlands at Tora Bora.[424]

Bin Laden's independence was soon compromised, by the Taliban's successful operations to capture Jalalabad and overturn Hekmatyar *en route* to taking Kabul, in September 1996. From here on, al-Qaeda and the Taliban would have a closer relationship, though there were power struggles between them: Omar is said to have "invited" bin Laden to relocate to Kandahar in 1997 "ostensibly in the interests of Bin Ladin's [sic] own security but more likely to situate him where he might be easier to control" after his inflammatory interview with CNN breached their agreement on a low media profile.[425] Despite this, the US still saw the Taliban as a group to be engaged with. In 1997 (when Mullah Omar controlled 90% of Afghanistan) senior members of the Taliban visited George W. Bush in 1997, when he was Governor of Texas, to discuss co-operation over oil pipeline routes that avoided Russia or Iran,[426] also visiting Houston Zoo and the NASA space centre.[427] Regional neighbours maintained varying degrees of influence with the movement, but Pakistan maintained the closest sponsorship, funding, and mentoring Taliban activities (as well as other groups inside Afghanistan) long after the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) ceased its covert support to the mujahidin under Operation Cyclone.[428] These links became increasingly

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[423] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, "9/11 Commission Report," 2004, http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/(accessed 21st May 2015). p. 65. For links to the Haqqani family, see Vahid Brown and Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973-2012* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

[424] See for example The Telegraph, "Inside Osama Bin Laden's Afghan Lair," 12th March 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/al-qaeda/11468992/Inside-Osama-bin-Ladens-Afghan-lair.html(accessed 21st May 2015).

[425] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004, o*p. cit.*, http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/. p. 65.

[426] Andrew North, "A War for the Pipelines?," 8th November 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1644813.stm(accessed 11th February 2015). ; BBC, "Taleban in Texas for Talks on Gas Pipeline," 4th December 1997, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/west_asia/37021.stm(accessed 12th February 2015).

[427] James Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan* (London: Random House, 2008), p. 291.

[428] The genesis of US-Pakistan funding for the mujahidin is set out in George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of How the Wildest Man in Congress and a Rogue CIA Agent Changed the History of Our Times* (Grove Press, 2007). For more on Operation Cyclone, Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), especially chapters 1 and

bound up with Osama bin Laden. For bin Laden, once aligned with the Taliban, his safety and security depended on helping them to neutralise the threat from the one remaining credible military commander: Ahmad Shah Masood.

Masood was a credible military opponent for the Taliban, but he also posed an intellectual and ideological challenge. By 2001, after years of failing to defeat him, and seeing him receive increased foreign support, the Taliban attempted to co-opt him:

> "Keep your weapons with yourselves, we'll keep ours. You can retain your territory. But there is one condition: just accept the Emirate of Afghanistan and its principles, and you can have the second most important post in the government, the post of the prime minister."[429]

Masood rejected this offer, considering an accommodation of this sort impossible in the long-term, though he did entertain "the possibility of sharing a coalition government with the Taliban for a transformation period, at the end of which we should go to democratic elections."[430] Masood addressed the European Parliament on 5th April 2001, attended by US President George Bush, and offered a stark warning.

> "My message to Bush is the following: If peace is not restored in Afghanistan, and if he does not help the Afghan people, it is certain that the problem of Afghanistan will also affect the United States and many other countries."[431]

2001-2005: The roots of the NATO intervention

Two days before the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, Masood was assassinated by bin Laden's al-Qaeda suicide bombers, using stolen EU passports to pose as Belgian journalists representing a fictional Arab television station based in

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2, and on the total cost, p. 68. For Pakistan's direct involvement in Taliban activities in the 1990s, Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The Power of Militant Islam in Afghanistan and Beyond* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 183-195.

[429] Piotr Balcerowicz, "The Last Interview with Ahmad Shah Masood," August 2001, http://www.orient.uw.edu.pl/balcerowicz/texts/Ahmad_Shah_Masood_en.htm(accessed 21st May 2015).

[430] Ibid.

[431] Panjsheriboy, Uploaded 1st March 2009. "Ahmad Shah Massoud Warns US President Bush in Paris - France," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gM6IY9uoZc0 (accessed 21st May 2015).
Note, the speech actually took place in Strasbourg, not Paris as listed above. European Parliament Audiovisual Services for Media, "50th Anniversary of the European Parliament: Key Dates," 11th November 2013, http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Page.aspx?id=751(accessed 21st May 2015).

London.[432] The one Afghan man capable of organising and leading a genuine large-scale military operation within Afghan borders – in credible partnership with Western forces – was dead. Terrorism experts believe Masood's assassination was the price the Taliban demanded for offering Osama bin Laden sanctuary after the 9/11 attacks.[433] Eight years later, the feeling remained that "he was a charming killer; he would have found bin Laden."[434] The two organisations were notionally separate, but the international effort to tackle al-Qaeda increasingly linked it to the Taliban. UN Security Council resolution 1267 *required* states under Chapter VII to take specific steps to restrict al-Qaeda if the Taliban did not hand over bin Laden by 14th November 1999. They did not, and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) – launched by President Bush on 7th October 2001 – continued apace, supporting the post-Masood Northern Alliance to retake Kabul and then pursuing the senior Taliban leadership and bin Laden deep into the south.[435] During a muddled attempt to capture or kill bin Laden in his Tora Bora stronghold, the British Special Boat Service are alleged to have had him located, but senior approval to act was slow in coming and the world's most wanted man slipped away on a donkey into Pakistan.[436] The first major chance for a quick end to the military intervention was missed here. As time went on, and now that the Taliban and al-Qaeda were effectively synonymous in many eyes, achieving this mission – initially designed to meet limited, specific counter-terrorism goals under Operation Enduring Freedom – required a sustained and expanded campaign, geographically and in mission scope. The UK offered to organise and command the first iteration of this expanded ground deployment, and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

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[432] See for example European Parliament, "Written Question to the EU Parliament: Murder of Afghan Military Commander Ahmed Shah Masood," 25th October 2001, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=P-2001-3036&format=XML&language=EN(accessed 21st May 2015).
The UN Secretary-General called him an "outstanding military strategist who made a crucial contribution to the preservation of the sovereignty of his country," see:

[433] Council on Foreign Relations, "US War in Afghanistan: A Northern Alliance Assassination," 2014, http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/us-war-afghanistan/p20018(accessed 21st May 2015). slide 3 of 41. Slide 3 of 41.

[434] Blake, 27th May 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/05/27/massoud.afghanistan/.

[435] The White House, "Presidential Address to the Nation," 7th October 2001, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011007-8.html(accessed 22nd May 2015).

[436] The Telegraph, "How Bin Laden Outsmarted America's Military Might in Tora Bora," 11th September 2002, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1400413/How-bin-Laden-outsmarted-Americas-military-might-in-Tora-Bora.html(accessed 22nd May 2015).

duly came into being on 20th December 2001 under UN Security Council Resolution 1386.[437]

ISAF "originally deployed to provide security in and around the capital Kabul" which had been wracked by factional fighting, with a terrible impact on civilian lives and the reputation of central government, since the 1990s.[438] In military terms, ISAF's deployment could be considered the start of the sustained campaign to establish and then enlist a post-Taliban Afghan government, and the population. Delivering their mandate was immensely difficult; to prevent the "use of Afghan territory, especially areas controlled by the Taliban, for the sheltering and training of terrorists and planning of terrorist acts," as UN Security Resolution 1267 required.[439] However, the political landscape into which that military campaign operated – one that would ultimately require a national reconciliation to nourish a stable future – had already been scarred with one central feature determined at the Bonn Conference: there would be no Taliban present in the negotiations on the nature of the new Afghanistan.

The Bonn Conference of December 2001 was "was a victor's peace attended by Washington's Afghan allies, who carved up the post-war status quo between them. The Taliban, and many of the Pashtun tribes associated with them, were not invited and have been excluded from power ever since."[440] On the face of it, this is unsurprising: the Taliban had lost control of the capital Kabul, and Kandahar (their spiritual and material base) by December 2001. They were in breach of multiple UN Security Council resolutions relating to collusion with international terrorism, and remained openly aligned with al-Qaeda and bin Laden, though he was across the border in Pakistan by then. They sought an Islamic legal basis for society in Afghanistan that was more extreme than the model (based on the 1964 Constitution and legal code) deemed acceptable by other Afghan delegates at Bonn.

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[437] United Nations, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386," 20th December 2001, http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/mandate/unscr/resolution_1386.pdf(accessed 22nd May 2015).
[438] NATO, "ISAF's Mission in Afghanistan (2001-2014)," 13th January 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm(accessed 22nd May 2015).
[439] United Nations, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1267," 15th October 1999, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1267%281999%29(accessed 22nd May 2015).
[440] Julian Borger, "Bonn Conference Could Mark Formal Start of Afghan Peace Process " www.theguardian.com, 20th June 2011, http://www.theguardian.com/world/julian-borger-global-security-blog/2011/jun/20/afghanistan-taliban-talks-bonn(accessed 22nd May 2015).

The negotiating strategy in 2001 was based on the complete exclusion and destruction of the Taliban, as both a military and a political movement. The structure of the Bonn conference was designed to reform the new boundaries of the Afghan state, and to place both the political legitimacy and the monopoly of force in the hands of leaders who aligned themselves with Western or American interests, or, at least could be co-opted to support the international counter-terrorism objectives. The talks confirmed US-backed Hamid Karzai as the Chairman of the Interim Administration, aided by the absence of existing President Rabbani, who "was insistent that any talks on the future of Afghanistan should take place inside the country" (Karzai himself was absent from Bonn, but the US arranged for him to address the opening of the meeting by satellite phone).[441] There were other political options, including (until his death in October 2001) those based around Abdul Haq, but Karzai had "long been on the CIA's radar as a future national leader."[442] Karzai had been the Taliban's international representative and then changed sides (possibly after the Taliban murdered his father); he also represented at least some degree of traditional lineage. As a Popalzai tribal leader (admittedly after his father took the position by force) his candidacy returned the national leadership to the tribe which had first held the monarchy in the 18th Century.[443] This demonstrated a clear and deliberate use of historical and cultural factors as part of the negotiation within the loya jirga to generate legitimacy for the post-Bonn administration. However, since this excluded the Taliban, and therefore the chief opponents, it is unlikely that this negotiation corresponds to the construct envisaged by Ripeness theory.

The US-led coalition and the new Afghan Interim Administration moved to transfer the administrative structures created in Bonn into political realities, but the military elements of the plan to support the extension of political power beyond Kabul

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[441] PBS, "Filling the Vacuum: The Bonn Conference," WGBH Educational Foundation, 1995-2014, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/withus/cbonn.html(accessed 22nd May 2015). For the United Nations transcript, see United Nations, "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions," www.un.org, 2001, http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/afghan-agree.htm(accessed 22nd May 2015).

[442] Gutman, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 279-282, especially p. 280. On other options, see Lucy Morgan Edwards, *The Afghan Solution: The inside Story of Abdul Haq, the CIA and How Western Hubris Lost Afghanistan* (Bactria Press, 2011), especially chapters 20-21.

[443] A fascinating account of the Karzai family, and their relationship with the Taliban can be found in Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (Penguin, 2004), pp. 285-7.

could not be achieved within the original mission definition or force levels. Initially these totalled no more than around 5,000 personnel (up to 5,000 more American forces continued the OEF counter terrorism mission under separate command).[444] In August 2003, NATO took over command of ISAF forces and a period of expansion began, first into the north. Fighting continued during and after the Afghan Presidential elections in 2004, leading to a westward expansion in 2005. The following year saw deployment into the south (with NATO assuming control of US-forces already there in July), and then finally into the sensitive border regions to the east by December 2006.[445] There would be a corresponding increase in troop numbers, and an increasing awareness that the parameters of the mission were expanding.[446] It was contact between the conflict parties enabled by this expansion that made the Sangin Accord possible – but the attempt to expand government influence backed by international forces was also the reason the agreement was needed at all.

The United Kingdom assumed responsibility for Helmand Province as part of NATO's Phase 3 expansion into the south, with Canada securing the opportunity to effect change in the critical province of Kandahar "for agreeing to deploy south."[447] British forces arriving in Helmand took over from a small US force (of perhaps 130 men) conducting counter-terrorism operations under the OEF mission, alongside their Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Afghan authorities based in the capital, Lashkar Gah.[448] Britain had lobbied as part of the pre-deployment negotiations that

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[444] Assessing the exact number of personnel on the ground, and whether they fell into the US-led OEF counter-terrorism mission or the UN/NATO-led ISAF stability mission is complex. For the United States' best effort covering 2002-9 see US Government, "Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001-FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues," Congressional Research Service, 2009, https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R40682.pdf(accessed 22nd May 2015). p. 9.
This report gives a figure of 5,200 US personnel deployed in 2002, on p. 9.

[445] For a useful summary of the expansion see NATO, 13th January 2015, o*p. cit.*, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm.

[446] For specific details on troop numbers and contributing nations (snapshots every 1-2 months since 2007) see the NATO placemat archive at NATO, "NATO and Afghanistan ISAF Placemats Archive," www.nato.int, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/107995.htm(accessed 22nd May 2015).

[447] Farrell, forthcoming, o*p. cit.*, chapter 4, pp. 30-31 within that chapter, in the pre-publication version of Unwinnable seen by the author of this thesis. Also Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, *Afghanistan: How the West Lost Its Way* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 158.

[448] Anecdotally, these missions were predominantly US Special Operations Forces, some similar in format to the tribal engagement community-level tactics outlined in Major Jim Gant, "One Tribe at a Time: A Strategy for Success in Afghanistan," 2009, http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5042~v~One_Tribe_at_a_Time___A_Strategy_for_Success_in_Afghanistan.pdf(accessed 22nd May 2015).

President Karzai replaced the Provincial Governor Sher Mohammad Akhundzada (SMA) – relative of the same Mullah Nasim Akhundzada who had issued a religious edict requiring opium poppy production to fund resistance against the Soviets 30 years earlier. London sought to replace a man who in June 2005 had been rumbled with nine metric tonnes of opium in his personal living compound. Sher Mohammad coolly replied that he had "confiscated it from drug traffickers and was only storing it until he could dispose of it properly."[449] His removal was an important signal of intent to move away from the warlords of old in the context of NATO's support for improving governance. The UK had taken on responsibility for countering narcotics, and Karzai's action to sack Akhundzada was intended to send a clear message to the opium traders. There would be costs for these principled stances: once he could no longer pay them from government funds, it would later be discovered that Akhundzada turned 3,000 of his own supporters over to the Taliban.[450] US Special Operations Forces had likely been conducting missions in partnership with specific (often tribal) groupings, to achieve defined and very local objectives. Individuals linked to the Taliban network– in strategic policy and assessments – continued to be counter-terrorism targets, due to the senior leadership's association with al-Qaeda.[451] As Major Jim Gant, one of the most renowned writers on these tactical tribal engagement operations asserted:

> "The fragmented nature of the tribal system, the absence of a major rift between tribes and the insurgents, and the feuding of Pashtunwali demand patience and forethought in the planning and execution of tribal engagement efforts. ***Small-scale community successes are more likely than large-scale province-wide successes***."[452]

The initial British deployment consisted of 3,300 mostly engineering and logistics personnel focused on building vital infrastructure while around 600 elite

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[449] Joel Hafvenstein, *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), pp. 312-3.

[450] Damien McElroy, "Afghan Governor Turned 3,000 Men over to Taliban," www.bbc.co.uk, 20th November 2009, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6615329/Afghan-governor-turned-3000-men-over-to-Taliban.html(accessed 22nd May 2015).

[451] Information on the exact nature of US Special Operations Forces missions and strategies is understandably and rightly absent from unclassified sources, so this is an assertion based purely on the publication of Major Jim Gant's work and an assumption that it broadly represents actions taken around this time. This should not be quoted as an authoritative statement without further referencing.

[452] Gant, 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5042~v~One_Tribe_at_a_Time___A_Strategy_for_Success_in_Afghanistan.pdf. p. 43. Author's emphasis.

Paratroopers were fighting forces required to conduct offensive operations.[453] The British Helmand Task Force faced a tough beginning – later described as poking a very large hornets' nest with a very short stick.[454] If a true negotiated reconciliation was required – to Zartman's definition – their task also included moving beyond narrow political relationships, for largely military ends, to expand political peace to include all tribes, province-wide. This required non-partisan actions to generate legitimacy in the eyes of all; history showed the actions of international forces and the governments they supported weren't commonly interpreted in this way.

2006: Britain heads to Sangin

On 26th January 2006 Defence Secretary John Reid unleased a storm of controversy – British forces were already deployed in large numbers in Iraq – by announcing to the House of Commons that further personnel would be sent to Helmand Province that spring.[455] Yet since 2003, there were calls from the humanitarian community to expand the mission. In that year Care International, Oxfam, Action Aid, Save the Children, Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group and 72 other organisations called upon:

> "The international community to accord NATO a robust stabilization mandate in Afghanistan. This mandate should include the expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to key locations and major transport

[453] Gordon Rayner, "British Armed Forces in Helmand Province: Timeline," 2nd April 2014, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/10737441/British-Armed-Forces-in-Helmand-Province-timeline.html(accessed 22nd May 2015).
For the balance within the UK's initial deployed forces, Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Tootal, Commanding Officer, was clear that the 550 or so soldiers from 3 PARA "were the main infantry element of the soldiers deploying to Afghanistan" in spring 2006. UK Ministry of Defence, "3 Para Soldiers on Their Way to Afghanistan," www.mod.uk (now archived), 3rd May 2006, http://web.archive.org/web/20060503225247/http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/MilitaryOperations/3ParaSoldiersOnTheirWayToAfghanistan.htm(accessed 22nd May 2015).

[454] Bird and Marshall, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 159.

[455] Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.*, p. 21. For the original announcement, see UK Parliament, "Statement About the Deployment of Our Armed Forces to Afghanistan," Hansard, 26 Jan 2006 : Column 1529, 2006, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060126/debtext/60126-10.htm(accessed 22nd May 2015).

> routes outside of Kabul … Current efforts to train representative, professional Afghan national security forces must be accelerated."[456]

Armed attacks outside Kabul were the root cause of this call, affecting the population and reducing the provision of vital services by Kabul's fledgling ministries, NGOs and others. By summer 2003, the ratio of armed attacks outside Kabul to those inside the city had risen threefold, to 7:1.[457] Yet the original purpose – to protect the capital and prevent factional fighting there – had been achieved, with Kabul an "island of relative tranquillity due to the presence of 4,800 peacekeepers."[458] Across the country though, there was one solider for every 100,000 Afghans outside Kabul, each alone responsible for over 100Km^2.[459] Meeting David Kilcullen's recommendations for a counterinsurgency campaign, of 50:1 would require a force of some 516,000 in Afghanistan.[460] At the height of the US surge in June 2011 – though the mission cannot be compared directly with peacekeeping – ISAF forces numbered 132,000 (including 90,000 from the United States, 10,000 from the UK), supplemented by Afghan Army and Police units and further US personnel on the OEF counter-terrorism mission.[461] Sangin was less than 100km from the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, and home to a population of some 50,000 people – suggesting around 1,000 troops were required. This is roughly the number deployed into Sangin by both the UK and US in later years. That said, Kilcullen's ratio does not reflect the significant additional challenges posed by the facts that the population were widely dispersed, there were major temporary movements of people through the district (including hostile elements), and that Sangin

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[456] Care International, "Afghanistan: A Call for Security," www.care.ca, 2003, http://care.ca/sites/default/files/files/publications/030617AfghanistanACallforSecurity_e.pdf(accessed 23rd May 2015).

[457] Care International, "Afghanistan Policy Brief, September 15 2003," www.care.ca, 2003, http://care.ca/sites/default/files/files/publications/AfghanistanPolicyBrief_Sept03E.pdf(accessed 23rd May 2015). P. 3.

[458] Care International, 2003, o*p. cit.*, http://care.ca/sites/default/files/files/publications/AfghanistanPolicyBrief_Jan03.pdf.

[459] Care International, 2003, o*p. cit.*, http://care.ca/sites/default/files/files/publications/AfghanistanPolicyBrief_Sept03E.pdf.

[460] This estimate uses figures given on page 4 in Care International, 2003, o*p. cit.*, http://care.ca/sites/default/files/files/publications/AfghanistanPolicyBrief_Jan03.pdf. 4,800 peacekeepers at a ratio of 5,380:1 with the population gives an estimated population in 2003 of 25, 824,000. Divided by Kilcullen's 50:1 ratio ("twenty counterinsurgents per 1000 population") gives a required force of 516,480.

[461] NATO, "ISAF Placemat 6th June 2011," 2011, http://www.rs.nato.int/images/stories/File/Placemats/15%20NOV.Placemat%20page1-3.pdf(accessed 22nd May 2015).

is the access point to the Kajaki Dam – the primary sustainable source of power for southern Afghanistan.[462]

The mission to Helmand Province was initially limited in scope; when the UK's 16 Air Assault Brigade deployed in April 2006, its aim was simply to support and protect the Afghan Government as it conducted reconstruction and development in the Lashkar Gah triangle.[463] This area contained the more populous river valley communities, and much of the so-called Green Zone. For Afghanistan analysts, "the Green Zone is an area of densely irrigated land, supporting almost 90 per cent of the local population. Depending on the season, crops of poppy, marijuana and maize reduce visibility to 10 metres and sometimes less."[464] Outside this central zone, of more urban communities living on the flood plain (at the time called "a lozenge of security"), trouble was brewing in Helmand's mountainous, isolated and rural northern districts.[465] Long before politics, religion or ideology are considered as primary motivators, there were significant geographical factors at work, accentuating local human security tensions over water, food and land access to extraordinary levels. UN environmental scientists reported that the period 1998-2005 had seen the worst drought in the Helmand basin since records began in 1830, with 4,000km^2 of water table running completely dry and famine affecting up to 6 million people in the centre and south of Afghanistan.[466] This correlation between climate shock and political instability mirrors earlier historical events, such as the King's removal in the 1930s.

[462] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 3535/10, "*Afghanistan/Helmand: Making Progress in Sangin*," 22nd March 2010. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-11. See Annex A.
[463] Anthony King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan," *International Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2010), pp. 311-32.
[464] Col. Richard Kemp and Chris Hughes, *Attack State Red* (Penguin UK, 2009), pp. 40-1.
[465] UK Parliament, "Defence Committee - Fourth Report: Operations in Afghanistan," 17th July 2011, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmdfence/554/55405.htm(accessed 22nd May 2015). See paragraph 29.
[466] United Nations Environment Programme, 2006, o*p. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

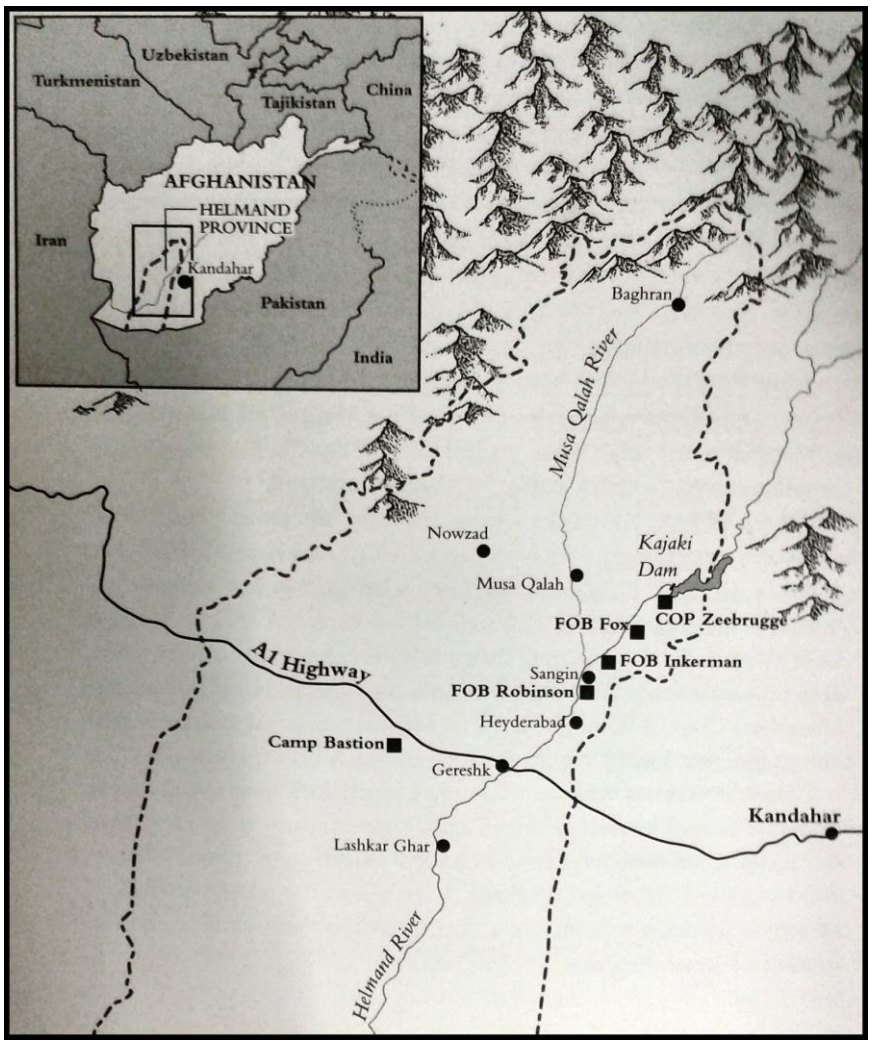

Figure 16: Key features of Helmand Province. Note Sangin's strategic position on the upper reaches of the Helmand River as the last urban area before the Kajaki Dam.[467]

Sangin District is detached politically and socially from the flood plain communities in central Helmand and the provincial capital in Lashkar Gah (though recent upheaval, migration, education, urbanisation and increasingly credible political outreach have moderated this, to a degree).[468] An Afghan Government official assessed that the "inhabitants of districts in north of Helmand are very warlike, illiterate people, while in the south of Helmand Province they are very open minded" meaning these areas "including Sangin District are very important for Taliban as they can hire or recruit people very easily."[469] In past times this fierceness was beneficial,

[467] Kemp and Hughes, 2009, o*p. cit.*, cropped version of the map given on p. x.

[468] This is explained earlier in chapters 2 and 3.

[469] Afghan sources have been translated by bilingual native speakers, and in some cases minimal edits have been applied to improve sentence structure or clarity of English, but never for meaning.
The quote is from perhaps the most significant of the new sources: Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

for "during the Russian time, Sangin Mujahidin fought very well and lots of Russian soldiers were killed in Sangin District."[470] Narratives questioning the intentions of other Afghans, Afghanistan's neighbours, and foreigners in general, remain resonant. Primary sources indicate that Sangin's combination of isolated location and excellent connections make it very important; it connects north and south Helmand,[471] and gives access to the nearby Kajaki Dam, which "has a very significant economic role in Helmand Province and in Afghanistan."[472]

Sangin's location at the upper reaches of the Helmand River gives it great influence over local land fertility. Access to water and electricity creates considerable friction. Control of the network of sluice gates, irrigation canals and flood run-off channels present in the Upper Sangin Valley affects water availability (and therefore crop production, both legal and illicit) downstream.[473] This is felt most keenly by those to the immediate south in the Upper Gereshk Valley (UGV) – largely populated by long-time rivals of the Alikozai tribe, the Ishaqzai. Sangin has also impacted on the lands to the south politically, providing a relatively safe haven for political and military actors, while sustaining them with rich food and narcotics crops. There are also significant structural factors relating to land and demographics: "the average farm size is the smallest for the province (3.22 hectares)" while "household size (10.1 persons) is larger than the provincial average, which compounds the economic pressures on the land."[474]

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[470] Primary Source PS-2, between 50-59 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alizai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local – Province. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-2. With thanks and acknowledgement to Theo Farrell who provided this data from field research conducted in 2012. Further details are set out in Annex A.
Of note, I can find no direct reference to Sangin in texts about the Soviet experience, perhaps because they tend to take a national focus: even Helmand Province is only mentioned twice in Grau and Gress, 2002, o*p. cit.*

[471] Primary Source PS-10, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alikozai tribe. Local to Sangin? Undeclared. Self-identified role: Government - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-10.

[472] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.
PS-2 also confirms the importance of Sangin for the Kajaki Dam, while the location more generally is addressed by PS-2, PS-3, PS-10, PS-12, and PS-14.

[473] See for example Map 3 (p. 15), or for a detailed description, see United Nations Environment Programme, 2006, o*p. cit*; Scott, 1980, o*p. cit.*

[474] Scott, 1980, o*p. cit.*, p. 6.

All this means that:

> "In the process of maximizing income off the smallest amount of land, Sangin has been the center of opium poppy cultivation in this part of the country."[475]

Locals confirm the link between Sangin's desirable location and narcotics traders, one claiming that Sangin was where the opium poppy was first grown.[476] Others emphasise the district's "very secret sub-roads that the Afghan Government does not have control over," connecting the area to Herat, Kandahar and the infamous narcotics trading market of Baram Cha near the southern border.[477] These factors provide the basis for a degree of economic independence, and allow the dominant group in Sangin to bargain with power brokers (including their own government). This is especially useful given the weakness of the formal taxation system, and the traditional expectation that patrons offer a degree of tax exemption to their allies.[478] For historical reasons outlined previously, the Alikozai tribe is dominant, and they have sought alliances with outsiders (both Afghans and foreigners), and regularly re-negotiated them as the power balance shifts, seeking political semi-autonomy and security guarantees in return for stability, and perhaps a share of the wealth.[479] In times of real upheaval, commentators noted that the "cultivation of opium on such an extensive scale is something new and is directly tied to the war effort," though foreigners travelling in the country as long as 150 years ago wrote of seeing the crop harvested.[480] The rationale is clear, since – for one Sangin farmer in the 1980s at least – poppy yielded up to "up to 100 times more than [he] could get from another crop on

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[475] Ibid.

[476] Primary Source PS-14, between 30-39 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Tribe Undeclared tribe. Local to Sangin? Not Local. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-14.

[477] Primary Source PS-13, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alikozai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-13.
Also confirmed by sources PS-1, PS-10.

[478] See chapter 2 for more detail on the traditional taxation system and relationship between rural communities and central authority.

[479] See chapter 2 for research on the Alikozai tribal positon in relation to Sangin. For wider work on the tribe, mostly relating to their power base in Kandahar, see Tribal Analysis Center, "Alikozai Tribal Dynamics: A Very Unusual Durrani Tribe," 2009, http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/PDF-TAC/Alikozai%20Tribal%20Dynamics.pdf(accessed 22nd May 2015).

[480] Arthur Bonner, "Afghan Rebel's Victory Garden: Opium," www.nytimes.com, 18th June 1986, http://www.nytimes.com/1986/06/18/world/afghan-rebel-s-victory-garden-opium.html(accessed 23rd May 2015).

the same land" because of its hardiness and particular planting cycle, it gives work when labour is not required for other farm operations, such as wheat cultivation.[481]

Finally, Sangin is said to have a deeper, spiritual importance. The shrine and hot water spring at Garm Ab (which literally means 'hot water') at the northern edge of Sangin District is believed by Pashtuns to be a "God miracle," and bathing in the waters will cure all illnesses and absolve you of all crimes.[482] It is also the home of an important family of religious men from the Sayid tribe – the only one in the area – respected by all Afghans and considered to be the "grandsons of the Prophet Mohammad."[483] It is the site of a prominent religious school owned by Mullah Osmani, the former deputy leader of the whole Taliban movement, as explained below. The Quetta Shura Taliban senior leadership (empowered by their resources, exploitation of traditional social structures and narratives, and their political reach) are simply another faction in this largely local dispute, though the linkages with narcotics smuggling and foreign financial and religious patronage joins this corner of north Helmand to these national, regional and global challenges.

Before and after his election as President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai sought support from four key power brokers in Helmand. One was "Dad Mohammad Khan (DMK), known locally as 'Amir Dado', the most prominent figure in the Sangin area. 'Amir Dado' was the tribal leader of the Alakozai tribe[484] in Helmand, an Afghan MP and the Helmand Intelligence Chief in the years between 2001 and 2005."[485] The decision to send ISAF forces to Sangin was in large part triggered by the killing of up to 40 of this man's family and friends in June 2006 by long-standing local rivals for land, prestige, and position in the drugs trade. One of the dead men was his brother, a

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[481] Ibid.

[482] Primary Source PS-4, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alikozai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-4.
Garm Ab was also mentioned as important by PS-2 and PS-3.

[483] Primary Source PS-16, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Undeclared tribe. Local to Sangin? Undeclared. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-16; Also, Primary Source PS-17, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Undeclared tribe. Local to Sangin? Undeclared. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-17.
See also the earlier description of the Sayids in chapter 2.

[484] Spelt as 'Alikozai' throughout the rest of the thesis for consistency, except where quoted.

[485] Coghlan, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 119-120. On DMK's history, see BBC, "Bomb Explosion "Kills Afghan MP"," 19th March 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7952333.stm(accessed 22nd May 2015).

former District Governor of Sangin named Juma Gul.[486] As with the British Empire and later the Soviets, ISAF's military deployment interacted with these disputes in and around Sangin. A helicopter pilot recalled "trips to Sangin in early 2006 in which we would park the helicopter and get out and take tea,"[487] yet a few months later "it was open war in the streets of the town between the Alikozai and Ishaqzai tribes."[488] This vignette illustrates the challenge of seeking to influence evolving local calculations about the legitimacy of the Afghan Government, and the risks to outsiders' legitimacy when supporting a government against its opponents.

DMK's local rivals – largely from the Ishaqzai tribe to the south of Sangin – had a long history of marginalisation and repression at the hands of the people Karzai had now chosen as his government representatives, both before and after the Taliban and Karzai himself came to prominence. It is perhaps unsurprising that there were:

> "Ishaqzai figures in the highest echelons of the Taliban leadership. Maulawi Aktar Mohammad Osmani, second only to Mullah Omar in the entire Taliban leadership, was an Ishaqzai from the village of Josh Ali, near Sangin, [author's note – written as Jushalay in 2009-10] where he ran a madrasa. So when the attack on Dad Mohammad's clan came in June 2006 it was, in one sense, a Taliban attack on the Afghan Government. However, it was also, to a greater or lesser degree, an Ishaqzai tribal vendetta, a drugs war hit, and a popular uprising against a local potentate."[489]

This episode demonstrates the way in which the Taliban insurgency in Helmand sits within and overlaps with other tensions and drivers for instability within the province and in the south of Afghanistan as a whole.[490] (This series of vendettas would also lead to DMK's eventual assassination in 2009).[491]

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[486] See Elizabeth Rubin, "In the Land of the Taliban," New York Times online, 22nd October 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/22/magazine/22afghanistan.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0(18th June 2015). . Also Coghlan, 2009, o*p. cit.*, pp. 119-120.
Attacks on Afghan intelligence personnel allied to Amir Dado, (now called the National Directorate of Security, NDS), had occurred before – a car load were slaughtered in March 2005 by men in police uniforms, for example. See Hafvenstein, 2007, o*p. cit.*, p. 227. Also slide 5 in: Tribal Analysis Center, 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/PDF-TAC/Alikozai%20Tribal%20Dynamics.pdf.

[487] Author's conversation with ISAF helicopter pilot, 11th December 2011.

[488] Sangin elder, quoted in author's conversation with civilian PRT official, 22nd November 2011.

[489] Coghlan, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 120.

[490] Ibid.

[491] Ibid. On DMK's death see BBC, 19th March 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7952333.stm.

The Afghan Government presence in northern towns began to come under threat in spring 2006. Helmand's northernmost district, Bagran, was under Taliban control, Musa Qala was attacked in May, Now Zad in June. So, when on 21st June, British Paratroopers were sent to Sangin for an operation that was supposed to last a few hours, or at the most a few days – sources say up to 72 hours – it was a decision taken against a backdrop of Taliban encroachment southwards towards the more populous cities of Helmand.[492] That mission, later described as "charging up the valley" has been assessed widely.[493] The early stages of the Sangin mission did have specific, local, tactical military and political objectives – to preserve the Afghan Government presence in Sangin and aid the President's supporters and officials. But who was that government, and what were the implications of supporting them? In addition to addressing the threat to President Karzai's ally, DMK, Helmand's Provincial Governor Mohammad Daoud demanded international forces be seen to support the local administration. This included the local police chief – DMK's associate and one of the few representatives of the national government – who had abused his powerful position and "was in danger of being lynched after being accused of raping a little girl."[494] Daoud had the ear of President Karzai, and was a hard man to deny; he would say "if you don't do this then there is absolutely no point in you being here because if the black flag of Mullah Omar flies in any of these places, then we've lost Helmand and we might as well all go home."[495] (Interestingly, during 2009-10, locals in Sangin considered the white flag to be the sign of Taliban allegiance).[496] President Karzai himself is alleged to have said "lose in Sangin and you lose in Afghanistan."[497]

The history leading up to Britain's military deployment to Sangin introduced a number of new elements into the longer-term narratives of Afghanistan's past. The involvement of international organisations, notably NATO and the United Nations, in

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[492] On the planned duration of the mission see Jerome Starkey and James Harding, "British Troops Set to Hand Frontline Afghanistan Role to US," www.commondreams.org, 9th January 2010, http://www.commondreams.org/news/2010/01/09/british-troops-set-hand-frontline-afghanistan-role-us(accessed 22nd May 2015). Also, Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.*, p. 107. Also related, 11-14 minutes in

[493] For example Michael Clarke, *The Afghan Papers: Committing Britain to War in Helmand, 2005–06* (Routledge, 2012), notably chapter 2, Valentina Soria, 'A Tale of Flawed "Comprehensiveness": The Joint Plan for Helmand'.

[494] See Tootal, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 84.. Also Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.*, pp. 107-108.

[495] Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.*, p. 111.

[496] Participant observation by the author while in Sangin, August 2009-July 2010.

[497] Kemp and Hughes, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 131.

decisions to send military forces to the country represented an additional evolution from previous international military interventions from the 19th Century and before. The presence of international terrorism, and the global resonance of al-Qaeda's actions planned from its Afghan base, introduces a new dimension to existing trends of foreign sponsorship of proxy groups operating there. After briefly banning opium production, the Taliban continued the economic reliance on narcotics initiated by the Mujahidin in the war against the Soviets. This was a key factor, increasing the group's capacity to fund, and tolerate, Hurt inflicted upon them by others – including international forces. Revenue from opium and other illicit activities provided the financial resilience required to challenge central government and their foreign backers over a longer period of time to be considered the legitimate political authorities in Afghanistan.

The exclusion of the Taliban from the Bonn Conference discussions and the complete rejection of accommodation on any level with the principal opposing group appear to be more extreme than previous conflict termination political processes. 10 years later, when the American Government confirmed that direct talks were underway between the US and the Taliban, the exclusion of a beaten but not exhausted enemy in 2001 was "seen by many as the root cause of the current Afghanistan conflict."[498] For those who grew up aware of this only policy (likely those who were around 18-21 years old by the time of the Sangin Accord), it would have affected perceptions of the Afghan Government as a negotiating partner so vital to the creation of a Way Out. The link between al-Qaeda and the Quetta Shura leadership also ensured a policy focused wholeheartedly on the total defeat of the Taliban. For Ripeness theory, this would radically diminish the chances of military leaders recognising a perception of Mutually Hurting Stalemate, or seeking a Way Out, and resulted in an increased willingness to escalate. These factors reduced the possibility of a Ripe Moment considerably, especially at the national level. This policy context, and the resulting mindset so important for explanations based on Ripeness theory, also influenced local perceptions of negotiating opportunities that arose in north Helmand, in both Musa Qala and Sangin. Importantly, this recent history was

[498] Borger, 20th June 2011, o*p. cit.*, http://www.theguardian.com/world/julian-borger-global-security-blog/2011/jun/20/afghanistan-taliban-talks-bonn.

experienced by those involved in the case study, but differences in interpretation between younger and older men would play a part in fostering a struggle for influence over the Sangin Accord that appeared to divide generations.

CHAPTER 5: ON NEGOTIATION IN HELMAND PROVINCE

Negotiating opportunities arise in north Helmand

The genesis of the Sangin Accord began with the arrival of British forces in 2006, and continued as efforts to foster a legitimate Afghan Government – supported by international military forces – advanced, influencing the lives of local people and competing with the Taliban offer to those communities. The presence of increasing concentrations of military forces from this point allows the explanatory value of the Ripeness theory to be explored, in specific relation to the case study, because of the centrality of military-inflicted Hurt for Ripeness theory. Prior to the Sangin Accord, two apparent negotiating opportunities arose, offering the chance to explore the impact military action had on the psychology of the conflict parties.

After the British arrived, "soldiers became magnets for attacks from Taliban, drug gangs and locals – just angry at the presence of foreigners. Many Afghans were killed, some by air strikes called in by troops to defend themselves stuck in their fixed positions."[499] During the first two years of the British deployment to Sangin, but especially during the first six months, extensive damage to the town centre was caused in the fighting both between rival Afghan groups and in the fight with NATO forces.[500] Self-defence imperatives meant it was necessary to improve the soldiers' visibility, and many trees, buildings and other obstructions to line of sight were removed, some using heavy ordnance. It was considered necessary to conduct "a massive bombing campaign driving the Taliban back, to save the men's lives, but the bombing also destroyed the homes and lives of the local people of Helmand."[501] There were valid military reasons for these decisions, yet the impact on the town was significant. Anecdotal reporting and the written records held by Sangin's mayor in 2010 show that at its peak the bazaar [marketplace] contained around 3,000 trading shops of various sizes, yet by 2008 this number was around 300.[502] There can be no doubt that the

[499] John Ware, "UK's Original Helmand Deployment Plan Examined," BBC News Online, 22nd June 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13855804(accessed 10th February 2012).

[500] "On average, 30 rounds of artillery were fired in the defense of Sangin each night and this inevitably resulted in some civilian casualties." Warren Chin, "British Counter-Insurgency in Afghanistan," *Defense & Security Analysis* vol. 23, no. 2 (2007), p. 221.

[501] Quotes between 11min and 14:30mins in Goodison, o*p. cit.*, in *Our War*

[502] Written records held by the mayor of Sangin, seen by the author and other PRT staff in May 2010. The market place was divided up into tribally-affiliated zones, though it took years of confidence-

fighting either with, or because of, NATO's presence played a part in reducing the commercial capacity of the bazaar in the town centre, and that this affected the perceived legitimacy of the government and international forces. This presents the opportunity to consider the validity of local civilian perceptions and motivations for the parties who would later negotiate the Sangin Accord.

The damage to communities and personal property, caused in part by the hunt for those irreconcilable Taliban who had to be isolated and tackled, risked alienating the population that international forces were trying to help. A longer-term politically motivated campaign, focused on wider stability and eventual transition, could only become a priority when the immediate town, and the government and foreign personnel based in it, were secure. Ideally, logistics would have benefitted from a secure road connection to central Helmand. These objectives were to prove harder than anticipated. Alongside the conflict, the political situation was complex and evolving rapidly, largely hidden from the soldiers and the local population – partly because it often took place away from Sangin itself. By September 2006, all sides involved in the fighting, and the local residents, were under extreme pressure. This pressure (or Hurt, in Ripeness theory) was applied to materiel as well as men. Senior Taliban "had identified the platoon houses' reliance on helicopter support as a critical vulnerability" and the risk of losing one with twenty men on board (an event that was perceived at the time to represent a strategic impact) was a factor in negotiations in Musa Qala (see the following section).[503] On helicopter numbers, six or "seven were assigned to the task force, of which five were serviceable at any one time"[504] (by 2008 this number was eight, while the number of British troops relying on them had doubled – helicopter numbers would later increase).[505]

Political representatives were active, both in the district itself and in other population centres such as the provincial capital Lashkar Gah. Mid-September 2006 saw 13 Afghan representatives purporting to represent a Sangin shura [decision-

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building and research to find the exact specifics from local people. Yet only then could reconstruction be shared fairly – something some local power brokers worked hard to avoid, to preserve their own advantage.

See also Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 97, footnote 8.

[503] Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.*, pp. 254-5.

[504] Ibid., p. 59.

[505] Patrick Bishop, *Ground Truth* (Soundings, 2009), p. 95.

making body] put forward a document containing far-reaching political demands, and claiming a 14 point plan had been agreed already by President Karzai, Governor Daud and [NATO's overall commander in Kabul] General Richards.[506] "At the Governor's request, UK representatives met the Sangin shura on 14th September in Lashkar Gah. There were 13 representatives, most of whom had met us previously in Sangin. They focused on one issue: ISAF withdrawal from the district centre."[507] Commanders at the time faced a potential negotiating scenario fraught with the underlying problems described by Zartman's Ripeness theory. What were the motivations of the opposite parties? Was genuine conflict resolution the aim, or a tactical advantage, or another conflict strategy? Was the proposal actually a demand, not open for discussion? Making an assessment requires the 2006 offer to be considered alongside wider political events in Helmand, notably in neighbouring Musa Qala – where an accord had been agreed on 12th September, just two days earlier.[508]

Musa Qala 2006-2007

After Sher Mohammad Akhundzada's connections with the narcotics trade led to his removal in 2005, President Karzai turned to Mohammad Daoud as his replacement in December of that year.[509] The new governor was often styled as Engineer Daoud, having graduated from Kabul University as a specialist in irrigation engineering.[510] This was a shrewd appointment from a technical point of view, given the centrality of Helmand's river and canal network to long-term recovery. However, politically Daoud suffered, partly because Karzai's response after sacking his

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[506] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 40720/06, "*Afghanistan: The Sangin Shura*," 18th September 2006. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-1. See Annex A.

[507] Ibid.

[508] Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.*, p. 257. The specifics of this accord are discussed in the following section, including discussion of the varied timeline for apparent agreement by different elements on both sides.

[509] UK Parliament, "Defence Committee - Fourth Report: Timeline for UK Operations in Helmand 2006," 2011, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmdfence/554/55404.pdf(accessed 22nd May 2015). Also Afghan Bios, "Who Is Who in Afghanistan? Daoud, Muhammad Eng.," 2012, http://www.afghan-bios.info/index.php?option=com_afghanbios&id=2572&task=view&total=3131&start=669&Itemid=2(accessed 22nd May 2015).

[510] Revolvy.com, "List of Governors of Helmand: Mohammad Daoud," http://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=List%20of%20governors%20of%20Helmand(accessed 22nd May 2015). Some content imported from Wikipedia on this page. Also Afghan Bios, 2012, o*p. cit.*, http://www.afghan-bios.info/index.php?option=com_afghanbios&id=2572&task=view&total=3131&start=669&Itemid=2.

predecessor was to appoint SMA to Afghanistan's national Upper House and appoint his brother as Daoud's deputy.[511] Daoud's achievements would be forever linked to the 2006 Musa Qala Accord, in which he was closely involved – Musa Qala was the principal town in north Helmand's Alizai tribal lands, to which the Akhundzada family had long staked a prominent claim (and where the deposed governor's uncle Mullah Nasim had pronounced on the importance of growing opium poppy to fund resistance against Soviet outsiders).[512] These were the successors of the prestigious ancient lands of Zamindawar, prominent in the Victorian era.

The accord's 14 points described a demilitarised 5km space encompassing the town, agreed between the government and a 15-man elders shura, who would conduct their own interactions with local Taliban to ensure that the shura members were free to "support a local administration that would fly the Afghan flag," while "guaranteeing that the district would not be used for [Taliban] military operations against other areas."[513] To explain the Musa Qala Accord in retrospect, using Ripeness theory, would require clear evidence that: a) the nature of the conflict parties was understood; and b) that their military leaders simultaneously perceived a Mutually Hurting Stalemate (based largely on military concepts of Hurt), and also a political Way Out.[514] Data on these elements is patchy, but a political account exists, written by Michael Semple who was closely involved from his position as an EU political officer. Semple's account is nuanced, and worthy of additional credibility due to his long service in the region and deep fluency in its languages. For him, the Musa Qala Accord "rose as a response to military exigency and became a vehicle for the provincial administration to reengage politically with beleaguered and estranged tribes."[515] If accurate, it would not confirm to Zartman's definition of a genuine agreement arising from a Ripe Moment unless the military motivation constituted an MHS felt on both side, and the political vehicle it created was mutually perceived as a Way Out.

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[511] Afghan Bios, 2012, o*p. cit.*, http://www.afghan-bios.info/index.php?option=com_afghanbios&id=2572&task=view&total=3131&start=669&Itemid=2.

[512] See previous explanation of this relationship in chapter 3 of this thesis.

[513] Semple, 2009, o*p. cit.*, pp. 81-2.

[514] To review the theoretical elements of Ripeness theory, please see chapter 1.

[515] Semple, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 79.

One Taliban source (an anomaly among those available, since most confirm there was never any intention to honour the deal) acknowledges that military pressure was vital, though likely from Special Forces raids rather than those holding the district itself: “when Mullah Ibrahim and Mullah Ghafoor, the two famous and key commanders of the Taliban were killed in the middle of 2006 by British troops, the Taliban lost interest in keeping the district office [in Musa Qala].”[516] This seems likely to be a misinterpretation, since these two individuals were killed in early 2007, in the events surrounding the breakdown of the deal – explained in due course.[517] Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that it is commonplace for the names of renowned individuals to be copied or taken over after their deaths, in homage, or deception. Sometimes a name (or radio call sign) becomes synonymous with the particular command position – giving the impression that key individuals have never been killed. Mistaken identity is also common. For example, there were three Afghans named with variations of Abdul Ghafoor detained in Guantanamo Bay from 2002-2006, alongside three others who gave their place of birth as Sangin or Sarawan Qala.[518] There was also a man listed under a false name who, upon release, would turn out to be (or become, as a result of his experiences there) Mullah Zakir. By 2009 Zakir was considered one of the most renowned senior Taliban military commanders. A founding member of the Taliban would later say of him “we think of Zakir as Nick Clegg, challenging a coalition from within, but only to a certain tolerable extent."[519]

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[516] Primary Source PS-25, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Tribe Undeclared tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - Province. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-25.

[517] The Broad Mind, "General David Richards Could Be Back to Mediate Issues Along and across the Durand Line," http://broadmind.nationalinterest.in, 9th February 2007, http://broadmind.nationalinterest.in/2007/02/09/general-david-richards-could-be-back-to-mediate-issues-along-and-across-the-durand-line(accessed 29th May 2015).

[518] Prisoners 352, 353, 362, in US Department of Defense, "List of Individuals Detained by the Department of Defense at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba from January 2002 through May 15, 2006," 2006, http://www.defense.gov/news/May2006/d20060515%20List.pdf(accessed 1st June 2015). p. 9. Apparently linked to Sangin, prisoners 291, 334, 450.

[519] Jessica Elgot, "The Taliban's 'Nick Clegg'? Founding Member Draws Parallels with Militant Qayyum Zakir and Lib Dem Leader," Huffington Post UK, 10th September 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/09/10/talibans-nick-clegg-rusi-qayyum-zakir_n_1869841.html(accessed 2nd June 2015). This source also confirms the connection between Zakir and Guantanamo Bay.
The original source for the Zakir-Clegg parallel is Michael Semple et al., *Taliban Perspectives on Reconciliation* (Royal United Services Institute, 2012).

ISAF commanders have since been clear that the military motivation was predominantly based on the intense difficulties of resupplying the garrison due to its extreme remoteness and the pressure and risk placed upon a finite helicopter fleet.[520] The platoon based there, consisting of around 30 men, sustained casualties and they (and the air support to which they had access) inflicted them in return. What is not clear enough to satisfy the theoretical definition is whether the Hurt on both sides was perceived as intolerable, preventing escalation. That said, escalation was likely prevented by the extent to which ISAF ground forces were already committed. This raises the new possibility that the Hurt (for the UK at least) included the knowledge that further troop increases in Musa Qala would require withdrawal or extreme risk elsewhere in Helmand, or a further parliamentary announcement in London increasing the size of the deployed force. Both options may well have been intolerable to politicians. This falls outside the traditional definition of Ripeness theory, which focuses on the psychological assessments of the military commander, based exclusively on military-related indications of Hurt. Additions to Ripeness theory offer alternatives: Brigadier Butler would likely have known of the domestic political pressure to avoid public requests for more resources, and so could well have factored this in to his own conception of the requirement for the Accord in Musa Qala. It is also possible (though not verifiable from the sources available here) that Taliban commanders felt the same political pressures from their own structures, and that reinforcing Musa Qala came with intolerable Hurt for their own objectives. Taliban commanders interviewed later were clear that they always "planned to accept the deal and then after the foreigner and Afghan forces left the district we would attack," though this does not prove conclusively that those were the motivations at the time.[521]

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[520] "With practically the entire British task force defending towns from Taliban attack, the British could contribute little to support the RC (South) [Regional Command] scheme of manoeuvre," frustrating the higher commander at the time Major-General Ben Freakley. See Farrell and Gordon, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 10.

[521] Primary Source PS-26, between 30-39 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alizai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - Province. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-26; Primary Source PS-27, between 40-49 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Tribe Undeclared tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-27.

Two elements to the Musa Qala case study illustrate the great complexity involved in political activities of this type. Firstly, the mobility of those claiming to represent political leadership is a challenge, since they are not always present in the geographical area apparently covered by any arrangement. For example, after the Musa Qala Accord was agreed, the key Afghan "representatives were keeping a low profile in Lashkar Gah and could not return to Musa Qaleh empty handed. But they recognise[d] this would not be possible until the Governor had Karzai's approval."[522] Secondly, both sides' need for approval from the highest levels for any local political activity, and the challenge of coordinating this at many different levels and locations. ISAF forces sought to resupply the garrison without a fight, while the elders who had signed the agreement could do little, as "without agreement from the Governor to their proposals for local autonomy, the shura did not have sufficient authority in the local community to guarantee security."[523] The elders' proposed 14 points, covering all strands of district life. Despite considering them closely, Western officials felt that "progress was unlikely while Karzai was out of the country," showing the weakness of a highly centralised system in dealing with the nuances so critical in local negotiation, and the implementation of any deal.[524]

This push for local autonomy arrangements was more widespread in Helmand than appears commonly known, judging by its limited coverage in much of the source material. While elders' councils frequently dealt with disputes between families and communities, these were rarely formal agreements,[525] and no agreements had been made between Afghans and the Soviets in that earlier conflict.[526] Late summer 2006 saw similar requests from groups in Garmsir District and Sangin. Garmsir "was the

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[522] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 41931/06, "*Afghanistan: Helmand Shuras - How Far Should We Go?*," 25th September 2006. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-2. See Annex A.

[523] Ibid.

[524] Ibid.

[525] Of the nine primary sources asked about formal agreements, seven confirmed that these were never used [PS-1, PS-2, PS-3, PS-4, PS-5, PS-10, PS-14],while one even confirming that "it is not in our culture:" Primary Source PS-3, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alikozai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-3.

[526] All nine of the primary sources asked confirmed that no deal had ever been made with the Soviets [PS-1, PS-2, PS-3, PS-4, PS-5, PS-10, PS-12, PS-13, and PS-14]. A typical answer confirmed that this time was a united Jihad for all true Afghans: Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

convergence of an estimated fifteen support routes across the desert, up from the southern border with Pakistan; intelligence showed that along these nebulous tracks men and materiel were trafficked northwards while key players regularly travelled back and forth from Quetta."[527] British officials assessed that in Garmsir 3,000 displaced families living in the desert wanted the government and ISAF to clear the villages of Taliban; they would then raise their own security militias.[528] In Sangin, elders produced a model for semi-autonomy also using 14 points, almost identical to those agreed in Musa Qala, and in the same week. Motivations cannot be confirmed for certain, but it is noteworthy that all three of the districts had central roles in production, processing or logistics for Helmand's narcotics industry. With the additional validity in the case of historical themes, local politics, military resourcing pressures and the impact of narcotics, it seems insufficient to conceptualise the motivations for a negotiated agreement solely around a military definition of the Mutual Hurting Stalemate. Since the Sangin offer occurred almost simultaneously, it makes for a worthy comparison.

Sangin 2006-2007

British officials and the Afghan Provincial governor raised concerns with the Sangin offer.

> "Daud's [sic] own sources tell him that more may lie behind the shura's request than pure humanitarian interest. The town's major drug traffickers want to reopen Sangin market, which has been severely affected by the fighting. The Taliban [also] have an interest in getting the drugs market working again so they can take their percentage. They will use Sangin as a resource hub and will therefore be happy to avoid fighting in the area."[529]

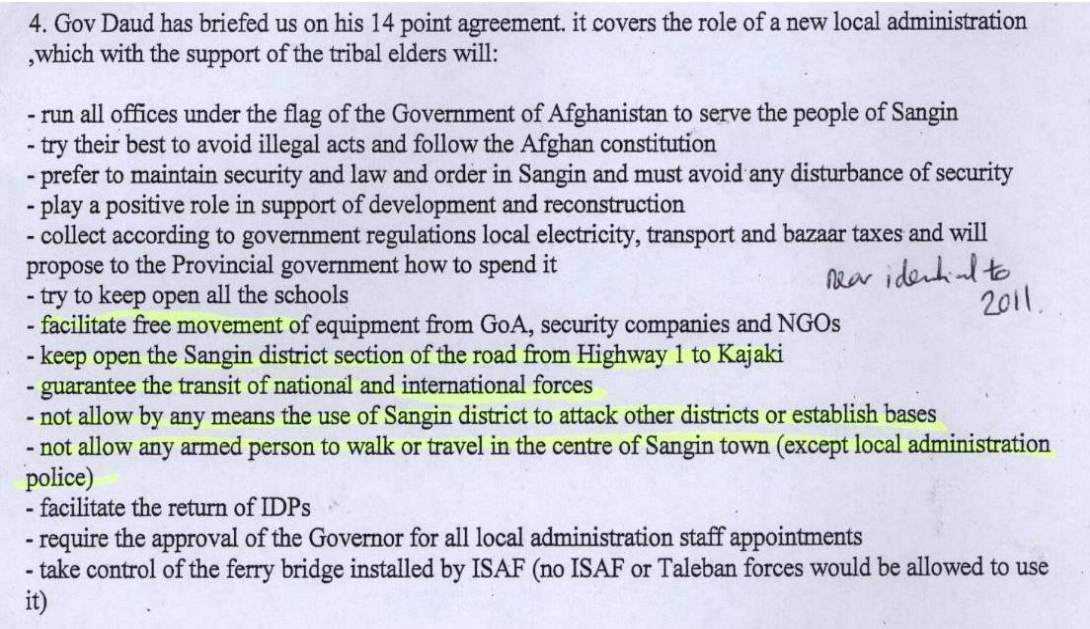
Nevertheless, the offer was significant and merited consideration. Officials reported, at that time "Karzai often extolls the need to find tribal solutions to the problems in the south. The shuras are just that: traditional tribal elders trying to solve community problems."[530] A detailed diplomatic telegram set out the risks and opportunities, but if it could be made to work, such local agreements offered one

[527] Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Three Commando Brigade, Helmand, Afghanistan* (Random House, 2008), p. 127.
[528] FOI-2, 25th September 2006.
[529] FOI-1, 18th September 2006.
[530] FOI-2, 25th September 2006.

route to establishing a level of government presence not seen in north Helmand since the 1970s, and without a large-scale military operation. In 2009, Sangin elders recounting the history of the area recalled that the district had actually been administered either from Musa Qala or Gereshk, with no government presence in Sangin itself in their living memory prior to Karzai's administration.[531]

As with the Musa Qala Accord, the Provincial Governor led the negotiations with elders.[532] In a mid-September meeting, he "produced a 14 point letter reflecting the points agreed with the shura. Daud had sent a copy of the document to the President, whom the shura had already met in Kabul. Karzai had told them he would satisfy their wishes."[533] In return, the elders wanted "ISAF forces to move immediately from the District Centre to [US Forward Operating Base] Robinson. After a month if they were satisfied with security in Sangin, we should move to a new location somewhere in the desert at least 10km from any houses. If the Taleban attacked us there we could respond without affecting innocent Afghans."[534] The official record of the first meeting is shown below (my highlights and written note).

[531] Participant observation by the author 2009-2010, confirmed in four interviews with separate individuals assessed to be over 60 years of age.
[532] Carlotta Gall and Abdul Waheed Wafa, "Taliban Truce in District of Afghanistan Sets Off Debate," 2nd December 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/02/world/asia/02afghan.html?pagewanted=print&_r=1&(accessed 22nd May 2015). Also
[533] FOI-1, 18th September 2006.
[534] Ibid.



4. Gov Daud has briefed us on his 14 point agreement. it covers the role of a new local administration ,which with the support of the tribal elders will:

- run all offices under the flag of the Government of Afghanistan to serve the people of Sangin
- try their best to avoid illegal acts and follow the Afghan constitution
- prefer to maintain security and law and order in Sangin and must avoid any disturbance of security
- play a positive role in support of development and reconstruction
- collect according to government regulations local electricity, transport and bazaar taxes and will propose to the Provincial government how to spend it
- try to keep open all the schools
- facilitate free movement of equipment from GoA, security companies and NGOs
- keep open the Sangin district section of the road from Highway 1 to Kajaki
- guarantee the transit of national and international forces
- not allow by any means the use of Sangin district to attack other districts or establish bases
- not allow any armed person to walk or travel in the centre of Sangin town (except local administration police)
- facilitate the return of IDPs
- require the approval of the Governor for all local administration staff appointments
- take control of the ferry bridge installed by ISAF (no ISAF or Taleban forces would be allowed to use it)

near identical to 2011.

Figure 17: The 14 draft points put forward in 2006 proposing local administration in Sangin.[535]

There was a wider rationale for considering the offer, and one that remained valid in deliberations about the 2011 Accord: "The main additional argument in favour of an agreement is the need to have secure access through Sangin to deliver the US$127 million hydro-electric project and security for the transmission power cables that will be built to carry the extra power to the rest of Helmand."[536] So, at a later meeting on 30th October 2006 it was proposed that "the 14 point agreement would need amending to include reference to guaranteeing the security of the new road to be built to Kajaki."[537] More so than in Musa Qala, the Sangin offer – if it truly delivered unfettered access to the Kajaki Dam – presented the tantalising prospect of upgrading the electricity supply for southern Afghanistan without redeploying significant numbers of military forces from the more populous areas of central Helmand. Nonetheless, officials were aware that "set against this are two additional reasons against a Sangin agreement: we would not wish it to become a sanctuary and safe haven for drug production and smuggling. [And] there is a less acute need to relocate

[535] Ibid.

[536] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 40720/06 (attached document), "*Musa Qaleh and Sangin Agreements*," 2nd November 2006. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-4A. See Annex A.

[537] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 48542/06, "*Afghanistan: Sangin Shura*," 2nd November 2006. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-4. See Annex A.

[military forces] from the District Centre than there was in Musa Qala," since the district centre was less exposed.[538]

Underlying the discussions about the strategic benefits, were calculations about trust and credibility – important components for a conflict party to believe in any political Way Out. Officials reported that Governor "Daud does not see the Sangin shura as representative of the people and he is inclined to impose delays and conditions."[539] In the wider provincial context there were also pragmatic reasons to explore the arrangement further: "the shura may not be able to deliver long term peace and security, but the process could buy some time for UK forces to reposition favourably and for the arrangements in Musa Qaleh to mature and demonstrate real effect."[540] In October, British forces changed over and the incoming Royal Marines found themselves in something of an unexpected position in Sangin, and at times in the dark about the political confidence-building measures which their military activities (and sometimes inactivity) supported. "Having put the [Royal Marines Commando] company in there expecting a very kinetic, high-risk period – there was nothing. I really don't know why; but it was agreed between the Taliban and the governor and on that basis we were constrained to the District Centre."[541]

During this pause for political links to deepen, senior Taliban leaders seeking reinforcements would have to bring them in from outside Sangin: local elders were starting to tell commanders that their young men were no longer available to fight. But the newcomers were far more experienced and tactically smarter.[542] Locals were also – in parts of the district at least – preparing to deliver on points 3 and 10 in their 14-point agreement with their government; preventing those from outside Sangin causing disturbance. The events the followed in spring 2007 would interact with wider social and economic forces, including the narcotics industry, and put ISAF forces under pressure to spread out still further in north Helmand.

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[538] FOI-4A, 2nd November 2006.

[539] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 45506/06, "*Afghanistan: Sangin Update*," 16th October 2006. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-3. See Annex A.

[540] Ibid.

[541] Southby-Tailyour, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 34.

[542] Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.*, pp. 212-3.

The anatomy of an uprising

Retrospective analysis by the UK Parliament confirmed that while commanders in London "regarded Governor Daoud, the Governor of Helmand Province, as an honest man, he needed to be strongly discouraged from making gestures—for example, the idea of a forward operating base at Sangin—that were unsustainable."[543] British Defence Secretary John (now Lord) Reid was clear that "prior to the original deployment, the MoD [UK Ministry of Defence] had considered that any demands placed on UK Forces to move further or faster than planned should be resisted" but very quickly "came under pressure from Governor Daoud and President Karzai to provide security in a wider geographical area" than intended under the initial plan for Helmand.[544] Other encampments of varying degrees of permanence already existed, some connected to the actions of (usually American) Special Operations Forces mentioned previously. One of these was FOB [Forward Operating Base] Fox, "positioned on high ground next to the Green Zone, overlooking the village of Putay, 10 kilometres north-east of Sangin, [consisting] of two run-down Afghan compounds – with no space inside for a company of [up to 100] men."[545] This area would prove to be vital ground for the canals controlling water flow, and the heartland of the Alikozai political group whose interest in negotiating in 2011 was to be affected by flooding, and a failed community uprising against the Taliban.

Late 2006 also saw some vital political changes in Helmand, with potentially large consequences for the Musa Qala Accord and the ongoing discussions in and around Sangin. President Karzai replaced Provincial Governor Daoud in December 2006, with a new man, Assadullah Wafa. This had significant implications, and it is unclear to what extent the resulting policy changes were publicised to – or believed by – those elders in Sangin who sought their own agreement with their government. For journalists at least, Governor Wafa's position was clear: although he would not reverse the controversial deal struck between British commanders and tribal elders at Musa

[543] UK Parliament, 17th July 2011, o*p. cit.*, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmdfence/554/55405.htm. Section 2, paragraph 47.
[544] Ibid., paragraph 46. Section 2, paragraph 46.
[545] Kemp and Hughes, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 218.

Qala, he told *The Telegraph* newspaper, "I will not repeat the deal elsewhere in Helmand."[546]

The Afghan Government, and by association, NATO, suffered from a major legitimacy deficit in Sangin after an event in spring 2007 (date unknown), despite this new policy clarity over support for local political arrangements.[547] For reasons that are not clear, this event was referred to within the ISAF system in Helmand as the Levée-en-Masse. The expression recalls the mobilisation of the French populace in 1793 to reinforce the Revolutionary army. It catalysed "one of the most powerful organizing myths of modern politics: that compulsory, mass social mobilizations merely express, and give effective form to, the wishes or higher values of society and its members."[548] The term initially meant mass conscription of citizens by government, but later came to include an uprising against foreigners – bound by "the more strict 19th and 20th century legal categorization of civilians attempting to fend off an invading force."[549] The evolving definition of "levée" provides a useful framework for considering who were the civilians, government, and foreigners, in the Sangin Valley in 2007, and whether their motivations were voluntary or conscripted. The perceptions of ISAF and the Afghan Government stemming directly from this event would have significant detrimental consequences for legitimacy and the likelihood of a Way Out which had to be overcome during the Sangin Accord.

For the Alikozai, the event was a disaster, and in 2009-10 it was simply referred to in the Pashto language as 'the disaster in the Sangin Valley' by the few locals who

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[546] The Telegraph, "Blow to British as New Helmand Governor Vetoes Local Peace Deals," 19th December 2006, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1537353/Blow-to-British-as-new-Helmand-governor-vetoes-local-peace-deals.html(accessed 23rd May 2015).

[547] The exact date is unknown and not confirmed in the available sources. The spring 2007 date comes from multiple anecdotal confirmations during the author's time in Sangin 2009-10.

[548] Cambridge University Press, "Academic Catalogue," 2015, http://www.cambridge.org/es/academic/subjects/history/regional-history-after-1500/people-arms-military-myth-and-national-mobilization-french-revolution(accessed 23rd May 2015). Quote from the publisher's description of Daniel Moran and Arthur Waldron, *The People in Arms: Military Myth and National Mobilization since the French Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[549] A useful timeline of the conceptual and legal evolutions of the term is given in Emily Crawford, "Levée En Masse–a Nineteenth Century Concept in a Twenty-First Century World," *Sydney Law School Research Paper*, no. 11/31 (2011), quote is from the abstract on p. 1. For a review of its multi-part definitions, and an interesting application of the term to the modern question of cyber-mobilisation, see Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Cyber-Mobilization: The New Levée En Masse," *Parameters* 36, no. 2 (2006), definitions from pp. 79-80.

were prepared to talk about it (and then only after 40 or more personal meetings).[550] In this thesis I refer to it as the 2007 uprising. While the facts were hazy, people believed it and it is therefore influential in the psychology of the Way Out (in the context of trust in one's opponent as a negotiator) and the Mutually Hurting Stalemate, optimally associated with a recent catastrophe. What follows is a summary of multiple anecdotal confirmations from the author's time in Sangin 2009-10. A dispute about taxation turned violent in the Upper Sangin Valley, but it also involved narcotics. Pro and anti-government groups often collaborated across political boundaries for economic gain. It is impossible to say if the tax collectors were Quetta Shura Taliban, or drugs barons allied with Taliban-aligned individuals. Perhaps they were local rivals, considered "foreigners" by the Alikozai, who use the word "foreigners" for anybody from outside their immediate community. The Alikozai – historically a pro-government group – organised a community resistance of around 200 people, refused the demands for tax and resisted with force.[551] If true, it would have been exceptional for a community to have confronted Taliban elements at that time and on this scale[552] – though isolated incidents had occurred at other times.[553]

Alikozai elders recounted that the District Governor, and through him, military forces, were asked for help. It is possible that the request was made to Special Operations Forces, whose counter-terrorism mission was markedly different from ISAF's. The support did not come and within 48 hours some 300 Taliban-aligned fighters arrived from outside Helmand and inflicted swift punishment on the dissenting leaders, killing them, or dispersing them into exile in Kandahar, Lashkar Gah or

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[550] As of July 2010 I was aware of only three Sangin residents who had been prepared to talk to foreigners in reasonable detail about these events, and only to personnel with whom they had spent an estimated 90 hours, over 6-9 months.

[551] On community resistance see Mohammed Osman Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan* (London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Development Studies Institute (DESTIN). Crisis States Research Centre (CSRC), 2008).
Also Seth G. Jones and Arturo Muñoz, *Afghanistan's Local War: Building Local Defense Forces* (DTIC Document, 2010), also published at RAND: http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1002.html (accessed 21st May 2015).

[552] Personal communication with CIA and RAND expert Arturo Munoz, King's College London, 10th June 2011. For Arturo's biography see RAND Corporation, "Biography: Arturo Muñoz, Senior Political Scientist," 2015, http://www.rand.org/about/people/m/munoz_arturo.html(accessed 23rd May 2015).

[553] Farrell, forthcoming, o*p. cit.*, chapter 5, pp. 2-3 in that chapter, in the pre-publication version seen by the author of this thesis. Also Malkasian, 2013, o*p. cit.*, pp. 54-56.

abroad.[554] A Helmandi official said "the Taliban again became a power in Sangin. They killed Haji Dastagir Khan, who was leading these people, and the others who stood against the Taliban left their villages, some of them came to [Sangin] District Centre, some of them came to Lashkar Gah and other safe places."[555] In general, these were older generation Alikozai, while some (generally of a younger generation) stayed behind and re-negotiated with the "foreigners" to retain some leadership in their hereditary lands. From that point, many analysts considered those local elders, judges, and religious leaders from the Alikozai tribe who stayed in Sangin as "Taliban," though many Afghans did not see things in such stark categories. Later analysis would summarise this event in a way that also recognised the complexity within the label Taliban: "In 2007 the Alikozai (the majority tribal grouping in the Sangin Valley) rose up against the insurgency. But lacking sufficient support from GoA [Government of Afghanistan]/ISAF, they were unable to stand up to surrounding (hard-line) Alizai, and were forced into an accommodation with the insurgency."[556] This 2007 uprising also catalysed a split in political influence between different generations in Sangin.

The term, and the organisation, "Taliban" bundled together a coalition of the ideological, the criminal, the coerced, and the disaffected.[557] Sometimes hostility to government, rival Afghans, or foreigners, was deemed sufficient to indicate membership, inflating estimates of the size of the real organisation under the control of its leaders in Pakistan. Soldiers also faced much more practical problems with differentiation: to Western eyes all the men looked pretty much alike; on one occasion soldiers were sent to find a Taliban commander armed with the knowledge that he had black hair and a beard and no distinguishing features.[558] Outsiders relied heavily on local tip offs, and local definitions, with all their subtle nuances – often with little capacity for multiple validations. Alongside efforts extend official Provincial and District-level state authority, there was an increasingly widespread attempt to

[554] FOI-11, 22nd March 2010.
[555] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013. This is the only source to discuss this under formal academic interview, and other recollections are from participant observation 2009-10.
[556] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 17471/10, "*Afghanistan/Reintegration: Signs of Progress in the Sangin Valley*," 14th December 2010. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-14. See Annex A.
[557] Bishop, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 233.
[558] Ibid., p. 119.

establish a parallel Taliban governance structure to challenge the formal Kabul government, or fill a vacuum.[559] Analysts referred to this as the "shadow government" or 'shadow governance', and added the prefix "shadow" to formal Afghan Government titles to indicate the Taliban's alternative (for example, District Governor and Shadow [District or Provincial] Governor).[560] The senior leadership was usually referred to as the Quetta Shura Taliban (QST – or simply the Quetta Shura), though other (at time allied) leadership shuras existed elsewhere, notably in Peshawar.[561]

In the Sangin area, prior to spring 2007, shadow governance appeared to operate with a degree of friction between local Alikozai groups and those from outside the district. As in older stories of rural conservative Afghanistan recalled in chapter two, the key points of disagreement were taxation (including of narcotics activities), distribution of economic opportunity, land ownership, water access, political autonomy and justice. The more organised and resilient a political group, and the more they were able to guarantee their own security, the less influence outsiders had. The Quetta Shura Taliban (as distinct from local rivals who had their own voluntary alignment with the QST) was simply another group – like Karzai's government – trying to achieve a beneficial relationship with Sangin's Alikozai communities.

In simple terms, shadow governance mirrored Kabul's governance. There were provincial and district leaders, often brought in from outside Helmand, and they brought their own civil officials and security forces or made alliances with local power brokers to provide them (or both). The extent to which these appointees in either system actually controlled the land which they had been designated was constantly contested – in large part according to how their actions affected local decisions about

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[559] See for example Antonio Giustozzi, "Hearts, Minds, and the Barrel of a Gun: The Taliban's Shadow Government," *Prism: a Journal of the Center for Complex Operations* 3, no. 2 (2012). Also C.J. Chivers, "In Eastern Afghanistan, at War with the Taliban's Shadowy Rule," International New York Times, 6th February 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/07/world/asia/07taliban.html(accessed 23rd May 2015).

[560] al Sahwa, "Taliban's Shadow Government: "Community-Level" Governance," 23rd January 2010, http://al-sahwa.blogspot.co.uk/2010/01/talibans-shadow-government-community.html(accessed 22nd May 2015). Also Stefanie Nijssen, "The Taliban's Shadow Government in Afghanistan," *Civil-Military Fusion Centre*, (2011).

[561] Jeffrey Dressler and Carl Forsberg, *The Quetta Shura Taliban in Southern Afghanistan: Organization, Operations, and Shadow Governance* (Institute for the Study of War, 2009). Also Farrell, 2013, o*p. cit*; Antonio Giustozzi, *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field* (Hurst, 2009), especially chapters 7 and 9.

human security and comparative advantage. There were two significant differences between shadow governance and Kabul's official structures. Firstly, the Quetta Shura appointed shadow governors for most provinces, reviewed their performance, and replaced them periodically. Critically "they established a body to receive complaints against their own "officials" and to act on them.[562] In this, the shadow governance offered a much more immediate sense of accountability, albeit at the expense of any formal democratic mechanism. Secondly, in the Sangin area at least, the QST were at times prepared to allocate multiple shadow District Governors, to liaise with or govern defined political groupings based closely around tribe. Thus Kabul's formal administrative boundaries had no impact on these areas of responsibility. There was in 2010, for example: an Ishaqzai-friendly shadow governor for the areas south of Sangin town which spanned the state district boundary between Gereshk and Sangin, and; an Alikozai-friendly shadow governor for the Upper Sangin Valley area. The Afghan government had one District Governor for Sangin and another in Gereshk to cover these areas, with a remit to apply the same policies to all.[563] While tribal approaches had weakness, this made shadow governance more flexible and tailored to local realities. An approximation of these interplays is shown on the following diagram:

[562] This is a quote from al Sahwa, 23rd January 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://al-sahwa.blogspot.co.uk/2010/01/talibans-shadow-government-community.html. The source is General McChrystal's 2009 ISAF Commander's assessment, available in searchable format at ISAF, "COMISAF Initial Assessment (Unclassified) - Searchable Document," 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/21/AR2009092100110.html(accessed 22nd May 2015). For the official Command Historian's review of the writing process and a copy of the report itself see Col. Matthew C. Brand, "General McChrystal's Strategic Assessment: Evaluating the Operating Environment in Afghanistan in the Summer of 2009," Air University Press, 2011, http://aupress.maxwell.af.mil/digital/pdf/paper/ap_brand_mcchrystals_assessment.pdf(accessed 22nd May 2015).

[563] This system of multiple governors was certainly confirmed in Jan-July 2010 by multiple sources during the author's participant observation in Sangin. It appeared to be a response to repeated losses of control.

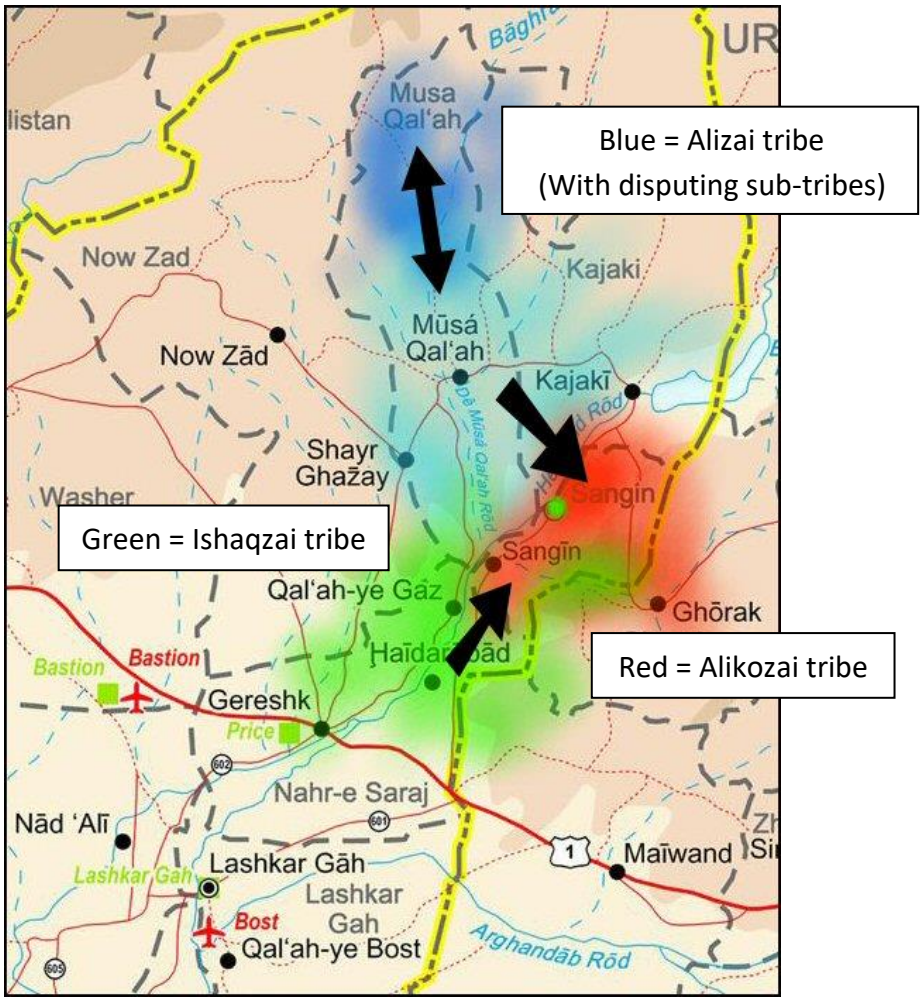

Figure 18: Approximate areas of perceived entitlement by the dominant tribes in north Helmand Province (with arrows showing typical directions of conflict). Other tribes and interest groups existed in these areas and contested control.[564] Image: Crown Copyright, 2013. Used with permission.

It also allowed some deep underlying local grievances between groups to go unsolved, as stability could be enforced through threat, coercion, and harsh justice for infractions, while also offering solutions and representation that preserved local perceptions of geographical or social boundaries rather than brokering between them. Formal centralised Kabul governance was less able to do this because their structures and areas of responsibility were aligned to district boundaries set in the early-mid 20th Century.[565] As explained earlier, these boundaries were designed to advantage Kabul's allies, placing Karzai's District Governors in north Helmand in a sometimes challenging position when seeking to promote reconciliation between rival groups, and between

[564] Labels have been added to the base mapping by the author.

[565] As set out in chapter 2, based closely on Adamec, 1985, o*p. cit.*

the population and the concept of central government. In the face of these deep conflict drivers, security tended either to require overwhelming military dominance or to depend on brokering settlements that often spanned individual districts' boundaries. In Sangin, for example, stability in the Alikozai lands of the upper district would likely require political agreements – whether to manage, or resolve, the conflict – with rival neighbours in Kajaki, Musa Qala and the Upper Gereshk Valley. These areas were all the responsibility of other District Governors and military commanders not resident in Sangin, and – after Sangin's handover to the US in 2010 – also divided between the UK and the Americans.[566] In many ways, both systems relied on co-opting individuals whom the local community respected. Solving a political dispute spanning districts and appealing to the most credible local individuals to change sides required both a much higher degree of credibility and greater administrative capacity from Kabul's political system than was available in 2006. There were to be consequences for both Musa Qala and Sangin as a result.

Red lines and deal breakers

The end of the Musa Qala Accord

The Musa Qala Accord of late 2006 accelerated wider debates about the policies involved. Provincial Governor Wafa's predecessor, Daoud, had always been clear that any agreement must ensure "the flag of Afghanistan must continue to fly above the district centre; the new administration must collect taxes, guarantee the safety of government property, keeps roads open, and facilitate access for central government officials and development agencies."[567] To impose this through sheer military force throughout Helmand and the south was not possible with the numbers of troops available at that time. It is worth recalling that ISAF numbered around 15,000 across the entire country by the time the Musa Qala Accord was agreed.[568] In contrast, ISAF troops in Helmand alone would be close to 30,000 by the time the 2011 Sangin

[566] To some extent this mirrored the long-standing rivalries present in the area in the 19th Century, most recently enflamed by the post-Soviet civil war. See chapter 2.
[567] FOI-3, 16th October 2006.
[568] "ISAF currently numbers about 9,200 troops, but is expected to increase to about 15,000" in BBC, "UK Troops 'to Target Terrorists'," 24th April 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk/4935532.stm(accessed 22nd May 2015).

Accord was announced, supported by a huge uplift in the number of Afghan forces: nationally the Afghan National Army (ANA) totalled in 46,000 in January 2007, but 130,000 by June 2010.[569]

Daoud's actions to cement the agreement in Musa Qala were beset by implementation difficulties. The jirga of tribal elders had selected 50 men to provide security, who would be sent to Lashkar Gah for training; the elders would turn to the Afghan authorities and ISAF for help if further threats appeared.[570] The risks associated with being identified publicly, and then leaving rather than be trained in Musa Qala itself, reduced the men available for providing security to 30 for an entire town. It also exposed their families to the threat of intimidation (or worse) for colluding with the government. This would be a problem for other outlying rural and fringe areas. The military priority was not to allocate forces for a potential quick reaction force to support Musa Qala but (from October 2006) to use the withdrawn forces to focus on "the Afghan Development Zone, centred on Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital."[571] The elders in Musa Qala also faced understandable challenges; the area had been in near-constant conflict for decades, and for many years "the state [had been] largely absent in Helmand, providing little in the way of way of security, infrastructure or public services."[572] The interface between a traditional, local group and the formal structures of state were also highly problematic: those looking to establish the formal government, "were happy to talk with a jirga, but all expected to channel resources through [Afghan] government departments, which in reality were never going to set foot in Musa Qala [at that time]."[573] This left the elders in a very weak position, unable to deliver the tangible benefits in the district centre required to bestow the patronage necessary to mobilise a minimal force to defend the district.[574]

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[569] See Anthony H. Cordesman, "Afghan National Security Forces: What It Will Take to Implement the ISAF Strategy," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010, http://csis.org/files/publication/101115_Cordesman_AfghanNationalSecurityForces_Web.pdf(accessed 28th May 2015). Page 89.

[570] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 49851/06, "*Afghanistan: Meeting with Musa Qaleh Elders*," 9th November 2006. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-6. See Annex A.

[571] Southby-Tailyour, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 35-6.

[572] Ware, 22nd June 2011, o*p. cit.*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13855804.

[573] Semple, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 85.

[574] Ibid.

Despite the implementation problems, especially with no ISAF or reconstruction expertise based in the district, the policy of helping to rebuild the Afghan state had both backers and opponents. UK Defence Secretary John Reid had stated right from the start that opponents "will want to destroy the economy and the legitimate trade and the government that we are helping to build up" while officials in November 2006 observed that "reconstruction was now beginning to take place, but warlords saw development as a danger to themselves. So did the Taliban."[575] Meanwhile, January 2007 saw the new Provincial Governor Wafa in Kabul seeking Presidential approval for the Musa Qala Accord to be amended, adding additional stipulations that brought it closer to the model of governance enshrined in national-level policies:

1) ANSF and ISAF should be free to patrol any time anywhere without the permission of the elders, who should guarantee they are not fired upon.

2) Taxes collected in Musa Qala needed to be paid to the government in Lashkar Gah (electricity, transport and bazaar taxes).

3) The district chief of police should be a professional ANP officer not a locally appointed commander.[576]

This case illustrates the considerable pressure that the Afghan Government was under, from an administrative and policy perspective. Wafa "had sixteen points on the agenda for his meeting with Karzai. Musa Qala was only one of them."[577] For the President, while the Accord was a high-profile issue, he was also responsible for some 400 other districts. At the same sort of time, the capital hosted "a delegation of 100 Musa Qala elders and Helmand notables lobbying in support of the Musa Qala deal and its replication elsewhere."[578] Abdul Ali Seraj, a nephew of King Amanullah (who ruled in the 1920s), and leader of the Coalition for National Dialogue with the Tribes of Afghanistan was a fervent supporter: "Musa Qala is the way to do it," he told

[575] FOI-6, 9th November 2006.
[576] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 243/07, "*Afghanistan: Governor Wafa in Kabul*," 4th January 2007. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-7. See Annex A.
[577] Ibid.
[578] FOI-6, 9th November 2006.

journalists, “sixty days since the agreement, and there has not been a shot fired.”[579] President “Karzai said he thought this kind of amended agreement would be a good model to use in all districts. Wafa is reasonably confident the elders will agree to the changes: they had now enjoyed the benefits of peace for three months and will not want a return to fighting.”[580] The Accord also had vocal and powerful opponents.

Daoud had been the subject of an increasing swell of negative lobbying and rumour-mongering. Writing at that time, officials felt that “the main drivers of this campaign are those who have been major players in Helmand politics for many years. One recent rumour designed to undermine him is that he is an agent of ISI.”[581] Wafa’s survival would inevitably require him to appear markedly different from his predecessor. Daoud “believed his dismissal was linked to drug smuggling interests and powerful warlords” while an Afghan Senator claimed he had "been talking with the Americans and they were completely against Daud,” and by implication, the possibility of local agreements like the one he had brokered in Musa Qala.[582] Newspaper reports from the time are more direct, blaming pressure from the CIA for President Hamid Karzai's decision to dismiss Mohammed Daud as Governor of Helmand.[583] Whatever the truth, there are two reasons why approaches towards local agreements within the ISAF coalition may have been different at that time: Firstly, the relative size (and potential future size) of their military deployments were radically different, suggesting variations in approach to the timing and relative perceived value of collaborative negotiated solutions. Secondly, the particular impact of the deep national trauma of 9/11 on America, and the Taliban’s link to al-Qaeda and bin Laden. These points may have underpinned slightly different conceptions of the implications of a negotiated

[579] Gall and Wafa, 2nd December 2006, o*p. cit.*, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/02/world/asia/02afghan.html?pagewanted=print&_r=1&.
[580] FOI-7, 4th January 2007.
[581] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 49169/06, "*Afghanistan: Governor Daud*," 6th November 2006. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-5. See Annex A.
[582] The Telegraph, 19th December 2006, o*p. cit.*, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1537353/Blow-to-British-as-new-Helmand-governor-vetoes-local-peace-deals.html.
[583] Robert Fox, "CIA Is Undermining British War Effort, Say Military Chiefs," The Independent, 10th December 2006, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/cia-is-undermining-british-war-effort-say-military-chiefs-427848.html(accessed 22nd May 2015). Also The Telegraph, 19th December 2006, o*p. cit.*, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1537353/Blow-to-British-as-new-Helmand-governor-vetoes-local-peace-deals.html.

local outcome at that time. A former member of the Northern Alliance summed up what some no-doubt feared: despite the local political and social nuances, the need to support Afghan Government decisions, and the differences between local and Quetta Shura Taliban, "the Musa Qala project has sent two messages: one, recognition for the enemy, and two, military defeat."[584]

The Musa Qala Accord ended in February 2007, after an ISAF missile strike killed a prominent Taliban commander. Each side stuck to different claims, ISAF that the strike was outside the agreed 5 kilometre zone, and therefore in line with the Accord, and the Taliban, the opposite.[585] It is perhaps evidence of the significance of Provincial Governor Wafa's policy shift that the breakdown of the agreement in Musa Qala Accord preceded the failed Alikozai 'Levée-en-Masse' uprising in Sangin by only a few weeks; (that it allegedly went unsupported by the Afghan Government, to the apparent surprise of locals, suggests a failure to communicate the change into fringe areas).

The Alikozai offer in Sangin

The negotiation between Provincial Governor Wafa and the Alikozai had likely broken down – or been consciously halted – by 6th March 2007, because ISAF launched Operation ACHILLES involving 5,500 troops including 1,000 Afghan forces (with a Sangin-specific sub-element called Operation SILVER) into precisely the territory controlled by the Taliban negotiating party. This came "at the request of the Afghan Government, to bring security to northern Helmand and to set the conditions for reconstruction around the Kajaki Dam."[586] Taliban attacks on contractors attempting to mend the dam had ended the upgrade process, in turn preventing improvements to electricity supply and water flow across the province.[587] It is also possible that this operation triggered the expectation that armed Alikozai dissent would be supported,

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[584] Gall and Wafa, 2nd December 2006, o*p. cit.*, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/02/world/asia/02afghan.html?pagewanted=print&_r=1&.
[585] Jason Straziuso, "Taliban Retake a Town, Breaking Peace Accord," The Seattle Times, 3rd February 2007, http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/taliban-retake-a-town-breaking-peace-accord/(accessed 22nd May 2015). Semple, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 83. Also Fergusson, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 271-2.
[586] NATO Media Operations Centre, "Progress in Sangin," NATO, 2007, http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2007/0710-noordwijk/factsheet.pdf(accessed 19th May 2015).
[587] Sean Rayment, "Into the Killing Zone," *London: Constable*, (2008), p. 156.

so decreasing the perceived risk of triggering the 2007 uprising. Most of the 5,500 troops would have been brought in to the area specifically for that deliberate operation, however, and not intended to base there permanently. At the time of writing there is insufficient public information to clarify the order of events, and the motivations and perceptions of the various parties.

It is unlikely that the 2006 offer from Sangin's Taliban was genuine. There was clearly a lot to gain by convincing ISAF forces to leave the area. PRT officials assessed that "there is no doubt the fighting in Sangin is causing civilian casualties and damage. But it almost equally certain that the interests of the drug lords and Taleban are driving the shura's maximalist demands. They did not respond to our suggestion of developing a more incremental approach."[588] This suggests that the willingness to develop the trust and credibility that can underpin a Way Out (in theoretical terms) was absent from the Taliban side. Nevertheless, an analysis based around additions to Ripeness theory could construct an MHS, by including the (commercial) Hurt felt by the restriction to narcotics trading caused by the presence of ISAF forces, the impact of heavy fighting, and resupply problems on both sides. There is also the prospect that pressure from local people constituted Hurt, through a process of political or ethical accountability (transmitted through local elders to either the Taliban, ISAF forces, or the District or Provincial Governor). This would certainly have been enhanced by the impact of Operation SILVER in which three UK companies supported by a US battalion were determined to "assault the town and once and for all clear it of enemy."[589] The stated objective – a peaceful district – was achieved for a time, but in the aftermath Sangin town "empty of enemy, was described as being 'like a film set with the town totally and utterly devastated."[590] As in Sangin, so in Musa Qala too (which was retaken by American, British and Afghan forces in late 2007) it was imperative to start rebuilding the towns and their infrastructure – much of which had been destroyed when ISAF forces occupied them.[591] It was but one of many facets that made achieving both military and political progress simultaneously so complex. Yet it was dialogue

[588] FOI-1, 18th September 2006.
[589] Southby-Tailyour, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 247.
[590] Ibid., pp. 251-2.
[591] Matt Dupee, "A Chronology of the Musa Qala Dilemma," The Long War Journal online, 3rd December 2007, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/12/a_chronology_of_the_1.php(accessed 4th June 2015).

over the conditions under which major infrastructure road and irrigation improvements could begin – upgrades that were far beyond the capacity of local Taliban officials or its organisation as a whole to deliver – that would eventually lead to wider political progress, and then to the Sangin Accord.

The reconciliation challenge

American General and later Director of the CIA, David Petraeus, speaking in 2014 stated categorically that "you can't kill or capture your way out of an industrial strength insurgency," you also have to "persuade as many as possible of those who are part of the problem to become part of the solution, to give them an incentive to support, rather than to continue to oppose. And that was reconciliation."[592] Enacting a policy of this nature requires a nuanced view of the people involved in the conflict, a mechanism to do it that is understood and supported, and is proven to address underlying conflict drivers. Binary views are problematic in such political landscapes, yet strong differences of opinion exist about importance of the local nature of the conflict. Thrulelsen for example summarises effectively the views of those who favour local drivers: "the insurgency in southern Afghanistan [was] highly localised in nature, being to a large extent driven by local commanders and local area networks often centred on individual commanders themselves."[593] The opposing view that local factors were not dominant is equally strongly supported (though most writers allow for a range of influences).[594] Alongside describing the complexity of the social dynamics within the population, working towards reconciliation also requires a greater understanding of what the other side (or sides) actually wants. "Insurgencies generally fall between these two extremes: to overthrow the existing social order and reallocate

[592] Academy of Achievement, "Interview: David Petraeus on Strategic Military Leadership," 13th September 2014, http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/printmember/pet0int-1(accessed 11th June 2015).

[593] Peter Dahl Thrulelsen, "The Taliban in Southern Afghanistan: A Localized Insurgency with a Local Objective," *Small Wars Journal* vol. 21, no. 2, June (2010), p. 259. Mike Martin's book centres on this analysis framework: Martin, 2014, o*p. cit.*

[594] While "the Taliban 'resurgence' in Helmand over 2004–2006 was greatly aided by intertribal rivalry and local resistance to predatory rule" it fundamentally "conforms to the pattern previously identified by Giustozzi, in his earlier study of the rise of the 'neo-Taliban' across Afghanistan from 2002 to 2006," in which the Taliban first sent in small infiltration teams from Pakistan. Farrell, 2013, o*p. cit.*, p. 849. The quote refers to Giustozzi, 2007, o*p. cit.* See also Malkasian, 2013, o*p. cit.* for a similar view.

power within a single state, or to break away from state control and form an autonomous entity or ungoverned space that they can control."[595] It is therefore critical to any process of negotiation to understand in detail how an apparently monolithic armed opponent is constituted, or in more succinct terms, to consider who were the Taliban in Sangin?

Decades before, the Soviet ground forces in Afghanistan had run in to the same problem, described evocatively by a 1st Lieutenant:

> "You know the word *kiriz*? It's the word the Afghans use for culverts, originally built for irrigation purposes. This was a 'kiriz war'. People would come up out of them like ghosts, day and night, with a Chinese sub-machine-gun in their hands … quite possibly you had been haggling with that same 'ghost' in the market a few hours before. Suddenly he wasn't a human being for you, because he'd killed your best friend."[596]

By late 2007, the local political and social complexities in Sangin were further complicated by the fallout from the failed uprising earlier that year. With many elders killed, others in exile in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah (or further afield) vowed to return, or tried to convince ISAF to retake their lands. The leaders that stayed behind faced little choice but to work directly with the QST shadow government. Therefore, as a result of their political weakness, to maintain control over their hereditary lands required them to allow, or actively increase support, for the wider Helmandi insurgency. There was more help for those laying bombs, an expanded safe haven and recuperation area for commanders and high value targets, and less conflict over narcotics. Sangin became the testing ground for new tactics, and suffered from a number of suicide bombers. There was a time when the Taliban was almost exclusively composed of Afghans but the organisation began to attract Saudi Arabs, Chechens, Punjabis and Pakistanis to replace leaders killed in ISAF operations targeting their command and control networks.[597] Local reporting from 2009 indicated that in Sangin these foreigners tended to be weapon specialists, particularly IED bomb makers, or

[595] US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 1-5.
[596] Svetlana Alexievich, *Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from a Forgotten War* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992), p. 111.
[597] Rayment, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 255. See also Farrell, 2013, o*p. cit.*, p. 857.

suicide bombers.[598] Changes to the membership of an opposing organisation need to be regularly assessed, but there may be few visible distinguishing identifiers visible to combat personnel. Nevertheless, there is an "extremely important difference between insurgents who originate from villages within the same district where they fight (local guerrillas) and insurgents who fight outside their district-of-origin"[599] because locals "represent key members of society the [international presence] is trying to stabilize."[600] A vignette from the Sangin Accord is illustrates this point well: one of the Afghan Government officials closely involved in it recorded that he:

> "Met with Commander [removed], who was one of the negotiating Taliban commanders, and he told me that when the [national] Taliban government collapsed, all the [local Helmand] Taliban commanders laid down their weapons and sat at their houses [the source context suggests they do this expecting a negotiation with the new power on the nature of the new political order], but later the foreign troops and local government of that time started arresting and killing the former Taliban commanders in every district, villages and house."[601]

It is likely that a degree of accommodation existed prior to the 2007 events between formal QST members, and Afghans fighting under the Taliban banner for local reasons. It is also likely that some Alikozai were involved in fighting with NATO and other figures connected to the central government, with whom they had personal rivalries or other issues. It would therefore be wrong to think of the Alikozai as a permanently unified political group, as universally pro-government, or to consider that their later alignment with ISAF's objectives places them in a different moral category to others who fought throughout. But the defeat in 2007 saw accommodation shift into repression. It also had a significant impact on the way the shadow government administration was constituted. Reporting from 2008-9 confirmed that the area was now under political and military control by foreign (non-Sangin Alikozai) political appointees and their supporters, with some foreign (non-Afghan) fighters operating in

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[598] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013; Primary Source PS-13. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[599] David Kilcullen, "Measuring Progress in Afghanistan," 2009, http://literature-index.wikispaces.com/file/view/Kilcullen-COIN+Metrics.pdf(accessed 1st June 2015). p. 28.

[600] Ibid. Kilcullen addresses his advice primarily to military commanders, but I have replaced his term 'unit' with 'international presence' to reflect the civilian-military team present in Sangin.

[601] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

For more on these differing expectations between Western norms and local ones, see chapters 5-7.

the area.[602] Importantly, the Alikozai group who stayed appeared largely to be from a younger generation (aged from 35-50, approximately) than those who were killed or fled (50 years old and above).[603] It is therefore possible that these events contributed to an internal, inter-generational Alikozai dispute, perhaps over who should lead, or the extent to which traditional authority and social and political standards should dominate.

Since those Alikozai military, civil and judicial officials who remained in Sangin continued their roles within Alikozai territory as part of the shadow government, their legitimacy, relative to that of the Kabul government is hard to define. "In Western liberal tradition, a government that derives its just powers from the people and responds to their desires while looking out for their welfare is accepted as legitimate."[604] These elders retained their legitimacy by staying behind, even if they had to join the shadow administration. In the language of counterinsurgency doctrine, these "Alikozai Taliban" became the cadre, considered to form "the political core of the insurgency," actively engaged in the struggle to accomplish insurgent goals.[605] The political strength of the cadre stems from the impact of their activities on popular support: "the cadre assesses grievances in local areas and carries out activities to satisfy them. They then attribute the solutions they have provided to the insurgency."[606] These same capacities, coupled with their high perceived legitimacy, explain why the same individuals were important reconciliation targets during the Sangin Accord negotiations.

Destroying the state bureaucracy proved to be a common insurgent tactic. It is the equivalent of the Kill or Capture policy, but aiming to degrade government capacity and dissuade other strong candidates from participating, so that the cadre may replace

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[602] Participant observation from 2009-10 indicated that the most senior Taliban Shadow Government figures were brought in from outside Sangin, sometimes from neighbouring districts within Helmand, and at other times from different Provinces entirely.

[603] It was noticeable that elders who were in contact with authorities in the Provincial capital Lashkar Gah, or other areas outside north Helmand, tended to be older men while those who stayed behind in Sangin were reported to be younger. Both groups described the other as illegitimate during meetings, and both operated a Sangin Shura for decision-making about the Alikozai – one based in Lashkar Gah, ostensibly aligned to the government, and another based in Sangin as part of the Taliban Shadow Government.

[604] US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 1-114.

[605] Ibid., paragraph 1-63.

[606] Ibid., paragraph 1-64.

that bureaucracy and assume its functions in a counterstate.[607] "A counterstate [or shadow government] is a competing structure set up to replace the government. It includes the administrative and bureaucratic trappings of political power and performs the normal functions of a government."[608] The man who was to become Helmand's Provincial Governor in March 2008, Gulab Mangal, had survived thirteen assassination attempts since being trained by the Russians as one of their local commissars.[609] But who was the counterstate? Central government presence in Sangin had been absolutely minimal since the Soviet times. Public service delivery was almost non-existent. Yet varying degrees of traditional Alikozai political structures had operated in Sangin for centuries. Thus it is easy to see why this group of Alikozai elders felt they were not a counterstate, but the only legitimate "state." As "a COIN effort cannot achieve lasting success without the HN [Host Nation] government achieving legitimacy", these Alikozai figures in the Upper Sangin Valley became the key to reconciling the area using the minimum military force. Their many-layered concept of identity left important opportunities to sow future disagreement between local groups and outsiders, typically aggregated together as one "Taliban" opponent.

Alongside an understanding of the nature of the political landscape, it is also important to decide where to seek a way in, at the local level or from the top, or both? Counterinsurgency expert Carter Malkasian suggests that to accomplish its aims in Afghanistan, the coalition needed "to create an acceptable bottom-up political structure than works within the confines of all the Afghan ethnic communities, is cognizant of their historical traditions and tensions to foster reconciliation and reintegration and workable regional relationships with the Afghan central government."[610] Yet alone this is insufficient, and there is a risk that local-level political work "cuts off the leadership" and leaves local agreements highly susceptible to spoilers.[611] Senior Taliban, including founding members, considered that "a general ceasefire (closer to a larger plan for reconciliation) is preferred by the Taliban more

[607] Ibid.
[608] Ibid., paragraph 1-32; ibid. This analytical approach is much older, and is epitomised by the classic Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chatto & Windus, 1966).
[609] Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Helmand Assault* (Ebury Press, 2010), p. 42.
[610] Marston and Malkasian, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 285.
[611] Semple et al., 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 9.

than local- and district-level ceasefires (reintegrating local commanders and cadres). A general ceasefire with Mullah Mohammad Omar's backing would allow the Taliban to better deal with 'peace spoilers' and dissenters."[612] This view is echoed by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles (later the UK's special representative for Afghanistan), who felt "we were naïve in expecting reconciliation to occur on any significant scale in the absence of an over-arching political process leading to a new political settlement. Only later did we distinguish between what we later called reintegration (bringing over low-level fighters) and reconciliation (dealing with more senior Taliban commanders)."[613]

For theorists, reconciliation is rooted in regular, effective communication that repairs communities and engages populations detached from central government. This is essential since "the collapse of social cohesion is the Taliban's most powerful enabler. And their operations and methods are deliberately designed to exacerbate it."[614] Definitions vary, but Louis Kriesberg's requirement is instructive, for both "a relatively amicable relationship, typically established after a rupture in the relationship involving one-sided or mutual infliction of extreme injury"[615] alongside a "process of developing a mutually conciliatory accommodation."[616] This relates to earlier discussions of ontological security, which in this context suggests that "security-seeking between actors is, in part, a search for cognitive stability and routinized behaviour, allowing for the identity stability and the reduction of anxiety."[617] In the case of Afghanistan, this placed Osama bin Laden's association with the Taliban as a central obstruction to a policy shift towards reconciliation and normalised interactions between conflict parties.

"Routinized behaviour and this cognitive stability can be hard to find, particularly where geographical spaces acquire certain meanings for powerful states and empires," for how could America accept dialogue with a group so closely

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[612] Ibid., p. 3.
[613] Cowper-Coles, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 67.
[614] Lt. Col. Christopher Kolenda, "Winning Afghanistan at the Community Level: A Rejoinder to Volney F. Warner and "C"," *Joint Force Quarterly* vol. 56, no. 1 (first quarter) (2010).
[615] Louis Kriesberg, "Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Settlement," (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), p. 184.
[616] Ibid., p. 189.
[617] Martin J. Bayly, "Imperial Ontological (in) Security: 'Buffer States', International Relations and the Case of Anglo-Afghan Relations, 1808–1878," *European Journal of International Relations*, (2014), p. 2. See Giddens, 1984, o*p. cit.*, p. 23.

associated with [bin Laden's] sanctuary, before his discovery and death?[618] The actions by the US Government to kill bin Laden show one way in which military activity can shift mindsets and policy towards shared outcomes, removing obstacles that block the goal of reconciliation. For Lederach, such actions enable "the creation of new perceptions on inter-group relations."[619] In Sangin, the Afghan Government would later appeal successfully to the same motivation for political semi-autonomy that led local Alikozai elders into an accommodation with the Quetta Shura. Convincing local people that their Afghan Government merited a more positive perception required new officials understood to be credible and trustworthy, past failures to reconstruct damaged infrastructure to be rectified, and a belief that the security guarantee so absent in 2007's uprising was available. A trusted channel of communication would be needed, and – while all these elements developed – a targeted but decisive military deterrent had to show the most irreconcilable or criminal elements that, alongside a more positive future, consequences existed for those that sought to disrupt it. These approaches would form the basis of the Sangin Accord.

Such an agreement was thought likely to have wider benefits: Stanekzai, the Secretary of Afghanistan's High Peace Council and Minister for Reintegration and Reconciliation said "northern Helmand was the key to achieving sustained security throughout the province."[620] Stanekzai does not give his reasoning in the source document, but the UK's official diplomatic assessment concluded that Sangin "district forms a strategic hinge linking the province's population centres to potential power generation in Kajaki. The insurgency continues to use the less stable north as a spring board for attacks on the central districts and as an ingress route from the east and north for fighters and resources."[621] Sangin acted as a buffer for the rest of Helmand, and so did Forward Operating Base Inkerman within Sangin District itself. This shows

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[618] Bayly, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 2.

[619] John Paul Lederach, "Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies," *Washington DC*, (1997), p. 31.

[620] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 17084/10, "*Afghanistan/Reintegration: Is the Ball Now Rolling in Helmand?*," 9th December 2010. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-13. See Annex A.
As shown in this thesis there were a range of possible factors, from the significance of Sangin: for access to the Kajaki Dam hydroelectric power plant; as centre of advanced insurgency; as one of the major opium producing hubs; and for long-standing historical drivers.

[621] FOI-19, 20th June 2011.

one example of the significance of local activity on a wider campaign. Created in July 2007, it was the most isolated, and northerly outpost in the Sangin Valley effectively 'acting as a tethered goat' – if the Taliban were attacking Inkerman, they wouldn't be attacking the strategically important town of Sangin.[622] Despite these assessments of its importance, there would be no clear top-level reconciliation programme in place and focused on the south of Afghanistan until winter 2010 when the long awaited reintegration and reconciliation roadshow brought the High Peace Council Chair (Rabbani) and Secretary to Kandahar on the 6-7th December. Here, Provincial Governors "were seen publicly to receive Rabbani's blessing to take reintegration forward."[623] Nevertheless, prior to that time efforts proceeded at the local level.

The years immediately preceding the Sangin Accord demonstrate the exceptional complexity characterising the interactions between international political norms and narratives with those perceived within Afghanistan. Significant differences also existed within the country, heavily influenced by local experiences and historical memory. International actors prioritised the use of elections to try and cement political realities into forms that could be understood, measured and supported by Western capacity. This approach represented considerable change for Afghanistan: elections were few and far between, and non-violent transitions of power were rare. Hamid Karzai's path to the presidency illustrates this interplay between the different systems of governance, and the willingness to fuse them together in the pursuit of maximum legitimacy. After Bonn, President Rabbani was moved aside and supplanted by Karzai, pending a traditional loya jirga [Afghanistan's traditional Grand Council] in 2002, and Presidential elections in 2004 – fusing both the historical continuity of the jirga, and the change of elections.[624] This complexity encompasses issues of identity, and the events outlined in this chapter clearly show the perils of monolithic or

[622] Rayment, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 3-5. The same source (p. 250) reports that FOB Inkerman was attacked 57 times between Oct 2007 to Feb 2008.

[623] FOI-13, 9th December 2010.

[624] For a journalistic account see The Guardian, "Disillusioned Delegates Walk out of Loya Jirga ", 12th June 2002, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/jun/12/afghanistan(accessed 22nd May 2015). . For detailed analysis see Thomas Ruttig, "Flash to the Past: Power Play before the 2002 Emergency Loya Jirga " Afghan Analysts Network, 2012, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/flash-to-the-past-power-play-before-the-2002-emergency-loya-jirga/(accessed 22nd May 2015).
On the meeting format, see BBC, "Q&A: What Is a Loya Jirga?," BBC online, 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1782079.stm(accessed 22nd May 2015).

simplified categorisation of conflict parties. This represents a core critique of the explanatory value of Ripeness theory for this case study.

When in 1999 the UN sought to enforce the will of the international community onto the Taliban, to effect the transfer of Osama bin Laden from their custody, multiple conceptions of legitimacy and expectation collided. The UN decided that:

> "the Afghan faction known as the Taliban, which also calls itself the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, comply promptly with its previous resolutions and in particular cease the provision of sanctuary and training for international terrorists and their organizations, take appropriate effective measures to ensure that the territory under its control is not used for terrorist installations and camps, or for the preparation or organization of terrorist acts against other States or their citizens, and cooperate with efforts to bring indicted terrorists to justice."[625]

This labelling of the Taliban as a unified single bloc was understandable at the global level, but within the movement there were important fractures of approach, mindset and allegiance. 1997, for example, saw al-Qaeda-inspired Arabs fighting in the Taliban ranks, though some of the more extreme Arabs refused to fight against fellow Muslims, and rejected jihad inside Afghanistan.[626] At the local level, in and around Sangin District, the Sangin Accord was possible precisely because so many variances existed between individuals and communities. The failed Levée-en-Masse uprising in 2007 would also disperse groups, influential upon the Sangin Accord, geographically (through the exile of key elders), and along generational lines. Memories of this event will be shown to delay perceptions of a Way Out, and therefore any Ripe Moment, because of a hit to the perceived legitimacy of the government, and international forces. While analysts so readily grouped these together under a single Taliban banner, it was the fragmentation of that conflict party, not the monolithic indivisibility defined in Ripeness theory that was to be significant for the prospects of negotiated agreement.

[625] United Nations, 15th October 1999, o*p. cit.*, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1267%281999%29.

[626] This story, and the important theological debate, is set out in Hamid and Farrall, 2014, o*p. cit.*, pp. 225-223.

CHAPTER 6: THE SANGIN ACCORD

Negotiating a local political agreement

Afghan assessments of the Sangin Accord offer an important alternative viewpoint for validating Western analyses, exposing differences in conceptualisation, motivation and method. The historical narrative of these events is described in this chapter (explanations grounded in Ripeness theory follow in chapter seven). The first immediate difference is in the name. While Westerners focus exclusively on Sangin (the name of the town and district), Afghans sometimes call it the "Sarwan Qala Accord" and rarely the "Sangin Accord." Others call it the "Alikozai accord in Sangin," prioritising the traditional naming conventions and the communities involved over the formal political geography of the state.[627] The Accord is not portrayed as Western-led by any sources; descriptions of the method and purpose in the primary sources is best summarised by an Afghan Government civilian, who described the Accord as "just an Afghani negotiation; the agenda of the negotiation was only how to bring security and construction development in the Sarwan Qala area and how to keep this trust and stability in future."[628] The role of the local elders is central, as brokers between factions in dispute: their traditional role in Afghan society. It is important to recognise that mediation of this type requires contact and open communication channels with all parties, and this is a necessary and respected function rather than a confirmed indication of untrustworthiness. The most nuanced explanation comes unsurprisingly from those involved in the Accord process. For them, "it was a security accord between the Alikozai Taliban and Afghan Government mediated by the Alikozai tribal elders in Sarwan Qala."[629]

The elders' role in dispute resolution is considered part of the natural political landscape by primary sources. "In Afghanistan, especially in the south and west,"[630] it is accepted that most of "the disputes in a district or village are solved by local

[627] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[628] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.
[629] Ibid. Also PS-2, PS-12.
[630] Ibid.

councils, local *ulema* [Islamic religious or scholarly] councils and local tribal councils"[631] especially "land disputes, water disputes, and tribal disputes."[632] So, the Sangin Accord appears, from the Afghan perspective at least, to be a clear example of political interaction between the official state apparatus and Taliban-aligned elements, mediated by local community representatives. This bestows two other characteristics upon it within the primary sources: firstly that it is a small-scale event, and secondly that the very nature of its interaction with the traditional structures renders it informal. Indications of formality are consistent with Western norms, among educated Afghans at least: it "was not a formal accord where it is written on paper and both sides sign that paper."[633] Since the accord is perceived to have been brokered while engaging with tribal structures, this determines the way it is finalised. "No sides signed any paper at the end of the accord, because both sides agreed before to hold an Afghani and *Pashtunwali* [meaning according to Pashtun customs] negotiation. We call this kind of negotiation a local jirga, and in the jirga the elders don't write their agreement in paper."[634] This perception of informality persists, and one source went as far as to assert that "it's not in our culture to have a formal agreement."[635]

The traditional jirga system therefore remains strongly binding and heavily rooted in trust, between individuals and communities. Local government political outreach therefore depended heavily on establishing interactions with these individuals, since, for one of the eldest sources interviewed at least, he felt "that for the villagers the most important is their elders, then the government, because the elders decide for them and they trust their elders a lot."[636] For him, this is potentially a

[631] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[632] Primary Source PS-12, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alikozai tribe. Local to Sangin? Undeclared. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-12.
[633] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. Also PS-1: "we don't need to make it formally and even we haven't signed any paper, everything was promises and trust which build between two sides." Also PS-3.
[634] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[635] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[636] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. This is confirmed also by PS-8, who suggested that "for the villagers if they are Alikozai, Ishaqzai or Noorzai their elders are more important than government and even than Taliban."

generational priority, asserting that while "these elders are alive, I don't think the process of our negotiation will change and maybe when our sons and a new generation come, they will change it."[637] There is therefore some underlying consistency with the system of elders and local dispute mechanisms, that an official administration is not perceived to offer. Despite the continuity provided by the institutions, the personnel in government are perceived to be changing all the time, while the elders do not.[638] This makes the ability of government (and any intervening force looking to support the extension of formal political control through institutions) to understand and identify the traditional elders a vital component of any work to generate a political solution, or a Way Out. In the case of the Sangin Accord, the government wheat seed distribution program was a key mechanism for this outreach.

Sangin District's Wheat Seed Distribution

The Helmand Food Zone Program was "designed to decrease poppy production in the province by providing wheat seed, high value vegetable seed and fertilizer input packages as an alternative to growing poppy."[639] In Sangin, the distribution intended to increase the relative legitimacy of the government, and political understanding. By November 2009 – when the distribution to which this thesis refers ran in Helmand (there were others in different years) – Sangin residents were nevertheless disappointed that the international mission had not carried out reconstruction as they had anticipated. People often mistrusted the central government anyway: the Pashto word *charwaki* "is used synonymously for government official, tax collector, policeman, and bandit."[640] Despite administration challenges, the Food Zone Programme "brought local Taliban leaders into direct confrontation with their out-of-area counterparts".[641] This friction occurred because farmers travelled up to 30 miles outside the area to pay around 700 Afghanis ($14) for 100kg of subsidised wheat seed,

[637] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[638] Primary Source PS-12. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[639] USAID Afghanistan, "Hilmand Food Zone Project," 2013, http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/USAID/Activity/255/Hilmand_Food_Zone_Project_HFZP(accessed 11th September 2014).
[640] Martin, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 5.
[641] Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 95.

300kg of fertilizer, and some insecticide.[642] They travelled back, alone or in groups, to small villages subjected to varying degrees of strictness by the Taliban shadow government. The program also brought local people together in the government-controlled area on a scale not previously seen. Up to an estimated 500 locals grouped together in the centre of the town each day for close to a week, offering the first significant opportunity since 2006 for Afghan Government officials to canvass locals on their thoughts, wishes and perceptions. The impact on local political understanding was significant.

While there were clear advantages for political outreach, the seed distribution was viewed with varying degrees of support by local sources. For some, it was a broadly beneficial initiative with a "positive impact on the villagers who had received seeds from the Afghan Government. We shouldn't expect more from a poor government. The villagers understood that they have a government that thinks about them."[643] But there were those who were unhappy with the incomplete coverage offered by the program. If it is true that "those people or farmers who didn't received seeds, they turned against of the government and increased their support for Taliban" then this would explain why an Afghan military commander felt that "we should have either distributed no seeds to the farmers or distributed seeds for all."[644] Trust and credibility were again issues: a local Alikozai elder complained that the government "distribution had a negative impact for the people and villagers, because villagers who needed the seeds didn't get them but villagers who were rich or had contact with Afghan Government received seeds."[645] Against the backdrop of events in the district since 2001 the wheat seed distribution was an insufficient effort. A deep sceptic felt it "was just a government show for the people. Their hope was that people will turn to

[642] UK Provincial Reconstruction Team, *Helmand Counter Narcotics Strategy 2009/2010, Local Nationals Press Briefing - Press Release [Unclassified]* dated 25th September 2009.

[643] Primary Source PS-15, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Ishaqzai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-15. Also PS-2: "The situation was very bad in those years and villagers needed food and other necessary stuff. With the giving of seeds they became happy."

[644] Primary Source PS-10. Self-identified role: Government - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[645] Primary Source PS-11, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alikozai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-11.

the Afghan Government but people in Sangin [had seen] lots of cruelty and those things cannot be washed away with distributing some seeds."[646]

The Afghan Government's wheat seed distribution generated three responses outside the territory controlled directly by the state. This depended on whether the Taliban military commanders and cadre of civilian officials in charge of a given zone within the Upper Sangin Valley (termed the Sangin shadow government by NATO) were "foreigners", or local men from Sangin. Some allowed farmers to keep the materials, usually where there was a kinship or other close bond between the shadow officials and the population. Some applied a tax at 10%, claiming it was the Islamic duty *zakat* (though this is traditionally a 5% contribution). Others used violence and intimidation, punishing the farmers for engaging with the Afghan Government. Sometimes commanders applied one rule for their own sub-area (usually to generate consent) and applied a harsher rule elsewhere; others were consistent.[647] Taliban senior leaders replaced Mullah Abdul Khaleq, their shadow governor in Sangin, on 19th November 2009 – he had lost control after public anger at Taliban attacks on local farmers.[648] This fact was not publicised widely at the time, and represents an important data point for tracking and analysis. The local population's tolerance for shadow governance, and capacity to influence appointments within it, are indicators for precursors to the Way Out. Within additions to Ripeness theory these factors could also contribute to a Mutually Hurting Stalemate, illustrating decreasing capacity or consent to govern. This friction allowed the District Governor to begin mapping which local Taliban leaders prioritised community welfare, and to use the possibility of future stabilisation work – in return for concessions – to challenge Taliban legitimacy in areas where there was no permanent military presence. However, as many local shadow government personnel were respected Alikozai remaining after 2007's failed uprising, the Afghan Government needed a higher calibre of official to exploit this friction over wheat seed for higher value gains.

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[646] Primary Source PS-5, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alikozai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-5.

[647] Participant observation by District Stabilisation Team staff between November 2009 and January 2010.

[648] Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 98, n. 23.

Local frictions continued into 2010, exacerbated by extreme flooding in February – anecdotally the worst in living memory. Local elders confirmed that "the 2010 flooding destroyed the lives of the villagers."[649] Many were "displaced from their houses, and agricultural lands were destroyed."[650] Emergency supplies and basic flood defence materials were provided. Afghan reactions to the government-led response were more positive than opinions of the wheat seed distribution. One ANSF commander felt that "ISAF did a great job for the people, ISAF supported villagers with necessary stuff by helicopters and this had a positive effect on the relation of the people with ISAF."[651] Others recognised that "ISAF was neutral and only supported the local government and their programs"[652] and so credited both organisations. This level of recognition of the distinction is rare in the primary source material: the "Afghan Government and ISAF helped with [flood] victim families in Sangin which had very positive effects on the soul of the villagers."[653]

District Governor Faisal Haq's office was known to have communicated with Upper Sangin Valley leaders since 2008, including over irrigation and flood defences for the upper reaches of the Helmand River. Haq was a Popalzai tribesman, yet trumpeted himself as a central figure in the Alikozai's 2007 uprising. President Karzai's half-brother, Ahmad Wali Karzai, agreed to a marriage between their families (Haq alleged) but the only source to comment on this suggested that while "Haji Faisal Haq was a very close friend of Ahmad Wali Karzai there is no news of their family relations in Sangin District."[654] The Taliban shadow District Governor reportedly operated from Haq's old family home in the Upper Sangin Valley (a psychological tactic of the Taliban), and taunted him in letters read to the illiterate governor by his hunchbacked brother. Despite his apparent connections and kudos, Haq was a partisan governor,

[649] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[650] Primary Source PS-15. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-4: "The 2010 flooding destroyed the lives of the villagers."
[651] Primary Source PS-10. Self-identified role: Government - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[652] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[653] Primary Source PS-15. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[654] Primary Source PS-17. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013.

less suited to modernising an administration. He saw government office often as a mechanism for safeguarding narrow tribal interests rather than promoting a wider reconciliation.[655]

Figure 19: Sangin District Governor Faisal Haq conducts a shura (council meeting) in 2009. The UK Provincial Reconstruction Team's head in Sangin, Stabilisation Advisor Phil Weatherill, looks on. Photo credit Eros Hoagland. Used with permission.[656]

Haq's counterparts in Sangin's rural areas were the same largely Alikozai military, civil, and judicial officials who had refused exile in 2007 and continued their roles as part of the local administration co-opted into the Taliban shadow governance structure. These were supplemented by "foreign" Taliban appointees (termed "Out Of Area" by NATO). The legitimacy deficit between older, exiled "Government" and respected, younger, local "Taliban" suggested a clear advantage for Taliban. But, assessments of legitimacy depend on frequent subjective judgements about the institutions, the people occupying key appointments, and whether actions taken confer credibility on personnel or the organisation. From a position of apparent advantage, the Taliban's weak response to the natural disaster in 2010 catalysed a

[655] This paragraph draws on participant observation during the author's daily meetings with Faisal Haq between September 2009-February 2010, while serving as District Political Officer.

[656] Mr. Hoagland confirmed his permission in an email exchange on 27th November 2013 (copy available if required).

dramatic reappraisal of the shadow government's claim to be the legitimate protectors of local communities.

The spring flooding caused extensive damage, particularly in Alikozai lands north of Sangin town. A network of canals siphoned water from the main channel into irrigated farm land, and the raging torrents swept much of this infrastructure away, damaging homes and fields and leaving Sangin's major communities vulnerable to further rainfall. Local people asked the Taliban shadow administration for help. In theory, the Taliban code of conduct, or *Layeha*, issued in May 2009, determined the correct response.[657] In Sangin it was believed to be held only by the shadow District Governor and senior military commander, and not available to the people (or the author of this thesis), so its impact on local decisions is unclear.[658] From 2009-11, local support for Out Of Area shadow government appointees depended increasingly on these outsiders waging "a guerrilla campaign in concert with a rudimentary population-centric strategy sensitive to local perceptions."[659] As community confidence and cohesion returned after the disaster in 2007, locals were prepared increasingly to request and then demand more moderate treatment, forcing the removal of two Taliban Shadow Governors for brutality in 2010.[660] One exacted harsh punishments on farmers who accessed the wheat seed distribution. The other intervened in the justice system demanding that the Taliban court in Saroo (in the north of Sangin District) apply Sharia law, against local custom, and cut off the hand of a hungry man who stole bread. Importantly, more moderate governance is sanctioned in both the 2006 and 2009 *Layeha* documents. Therefore, it is likely that any changes in practice stemmed from greater acceptance that harsh treatment of the population was "a major bane to the Taliban's political capital," and from problems asserting control – likely accelerated by the effective military targeting, notably of Out Of Area

[657] Thomas H. Johnson and Matthew C. DuPee, "Analysing the New Taliban Code of Conduct (Layeha): An Assessment of Changing Perspectives and Strategies of the Afghan Taliban," *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (2012), p. 78.

[658] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. "Even the Taliban commanders don't have the Layeha with them. Only the district chief and Head of the Military Commission have the Layeha with them."

[659] Johnson and DuPee, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 78.

[660] Mike Williams, "How the British Presence in Sangin Restored Trust in Government," 20th September 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/sep/20/british-forces-in-sangin(accessed 11th November 2013).

commanders and narcotics traffickers.[661] While those military forces based permanently in the district were heavily committed to protecting development in the urban centre and engaging with the population, other NATO and Afghan forces conducted a relentless tempo of night raids and other operations into Sangin's rural areas to complement the ground-holding battlegroup's approach. The District Government, approved by Provincial Governor Mangal, sent messages offering dialogue about the conditions under which the heavy engineering support required to repair the waterways and flood defences – using technical expertise to which the Taliban did not have access – might be provided. The near-term legitimacy calculation began to change, though longer memories would recall that these major irrigation works were the same ones that Westerners had promised, but not delivered, on more than one occasion since the HAVA project began in the mid-20th Century.

From one viewpoint, government support for flooded citizens was an entirely unimpeachable humanitarian response to a disaster. The immediate assistance – and the tentative explorations of longer-term construction projects – also played into long-standing local tensions over land and water. These issues had inflamed antagonism between groups; along tribal lines between Alikozai and Ishaqzai, and between communities of economic interest that spanned tribal categorisation – some related to narcotics. Self-declared Ishaqzai sources offer a view that places tribal antagonism as a dominant factor: "the main reason for fighting between the Alikozai and Ishaqzai tribes was the family of Amir Dad Mohammad Khan, the chief of Provincial NDS department in Helmand Province, who – with his brothers Mohammad Daud and Gul Mohammad – did lots of crimes against the Ishaqzai tribe in Gereshk district."[662] The position was more complicated than simply tribal rivalry. It incorporated struggles between members of the official Afghan Government administration for the right to tax narcotics networks of their rivals. "The problem was between Mamuk who was the Police of Gereshk District in the beginning of Karzai government [and also leader of the

[661] Johnson and DuPee, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 81.

[662] "They selected to steal and take the money of the Ishaqzai tribe by force because they had power at that time." Primary Source PS-6, between 50-59 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Ishaqzai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-6. Also PS-8.

Ishaqzai in the Sangin area][663] and Mohammad Daud and his brother Mir Dad Mohammad Khan. Mamuk was working with Mullah Sher Mohammad Akhund [-zada, known as SMA], who was President Karzai's governor in Helmand Province. Daud [more likely, his supporters] stopped Mamuk's car full of opium on the way to [the opium trading market at] Baram Cha, and disturbed other Ishaqzai tribespeople, taxing those villagers who were growing opium."[664] To the south of Sangin, this rivalry played out in the settlements around Qal-e-Gaz "where villagers still remember the cruelties of Alikozai tribe" (see Figure 18 previously to situate Qal-e-Gaz).[665] For some, this also exacerbated an extreme mistrust of government intentions towards the population. In the north of the district, the problems centred on the villages of Jushalay and Mianroday in the Upper Sangin Valley.[666] They occupied vital territory for military defence, but also (as rediscovered by the extensive survey work of ISAF's Military Stabilisation Support Teams) controlled key junctions in irrigation canal networks; waterways that had a definitive impact on the fertility of land south of Sangin.

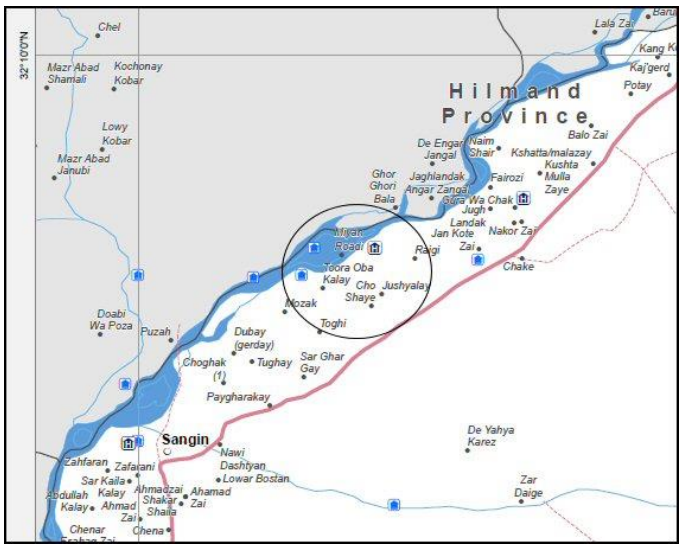

Figure 20: Villages in the Sangin Valley, with Jushalay and Mianroday circled.[667] (For more detail on this area see Figure 21 later in this chapter).

[663] Giustozzi, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 127.

[664] Primary Source PS-7, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Ishaqzai tribe. Local to Sangin? Undeclared. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Direct. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-7.

[665] Ibid.

[666] Alternative spellings include: Mian Rod; Josh Ali. As is common in Afghanistan, other villages also had similar or identical names, compounding mapping and recognition problems.

[667] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan Southern Region District Atlas," 2014, https://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1415351065_afghanistan-southern-region-district-atlas.pdf(accessed 4th July 2015).

An assessment of the longer-term historical trajectory, and the political ebb and flow relating to these areas, gives crucial context to the impact of a potential Afghan Government-ISAF politically-led intervention into the area. A Taliban fighter suggests that Jushalay and Mianroday were not important in the past, but that these two villages became important when the Taliban took control, becoming the Taliban centre in Sarwan Qala.[668] Western commentators confirm their importance to the insurgency.[669] The area also had political resonance within the Taliban movement further afield than the Sangin Valley itself: Akhtar Mohammad Osmani [an associate of Osama bin Laden, and second in command of the entire Taliban movement until his death in 2006][670] was from Mianroday, and his madrassah [religious school] there remained a centre for Taliban recruitment."[671] This suggests a strong reason for the village remaining the centre of the Taliban in Sangin. Accordingly, that area attracted significant attention from ISAF targeting, particularly after the mosque there became the staging point for repeated suicide bombing attempts in Sangin town itself in 2009-2010.[672]

The historical record offers a more complex back story, for it appears that the Taliban were enlisted to right a perceived wrong that was a legacy of the mujahidin resistance against the Soviets. If primary sources are right, actions that appeared to return the area to groups aligned to the government at the expense of the Ishaqzai-Taliban may have been inflammatory and perceived as unjust. Before the Taliban came to Afghanistan, these two villages were under control of Alikozai tribe in Sangin[673] and vital for those resisting the Soviet occupation:[674] "at that time the main frontline of

[668] Primary Source PS-8, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Ishaqzai tribe. Local to Sangin? Undeclared. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-8. Also PS-6, PS-9.
[669] Streatfeild, 2014, o*p. cit*; West, 2014, o*p. cit.*
[670] Reuters, "Taliban Confirm Top Commander Killed in US Strike," 27th December 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/27/AR2006122700330.html(accessed 5th July 2015).
[671] Primary Source PS-6. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013. Also PS-8, PS-9.
[672] Participant observation by the author during service in Sangin (2009-10).
[673] Primary Source PS-8. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[674] Primary Source PS-6. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013.

Mujahidin in Sangin was under Alikozai control."[675] The rugged terrain and convoluted waterways would have made an ideal defensive line, and so it is plausible that the Alikozai-led mujahidin made their military front there, but didn't move back and return the prime agricultural land after Dr. Najibullah's government collapsed.[676] If, as sources allege, "the Ishaqzai and Noorzai tribes are the real owners of those villages" and they have legal papers from decades ago, then the perceived injustice represented a clear local division ready for exploitation by the Taliban.[677]

It appears that the Taliban did indeed position themselves as the arbitrators in this case. Three sources support the story that locals complained to the Taliban about the Alikozai encroachment, and that the Taliban investigated the case and took back the agricultural lands, returning them to the Ishaqzai and Noorzai tribes.[678] One elder offers more detail, asserting that the significant mujahidin commander (and Ishaqzai tribesman) Atta Mohammad came from Farah Province and re-took these villages by force in the Afghan year 1359 [approximately 1980] to effect the transfer referred to in other primary sources.[679] The tribal division should not however be seen as a fully reliable indicator of allegiance, for although the Alikozai and Barakzai tribes traditionally support the Karzai government, there are Taliban commanders and fighters in both (though not as many as from the Ishaqzai and Noorzai tribes).[680] The conflict in Sangin therefore involved individuals spanning multiple identity categories, of tribe, government allegiance, relative locality, and place in the licit or illicit economy. Disputes in north Helmand also linked to higher levels, in both tribe and

[675] Primary Source PS-7. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[676] Primary Source PS-9, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Ishaqzai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-9.
[677] Primary Source PS-7. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. Also PS-8, PS-9.
[678] Primary Source PS-8. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-7 ("the Taliban took control of the Jushalay and Mianroday and then handed over our villages to our elders at that time") and PS-9, "Ishaqzai and Noorzai didn't have the power to retake their villages from Alikozai tribe and they were quiet, until the Taliban regime came."
[679] Primary Source PS-6. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013.
[680] Primary Source PS-7. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

organisation, suggesting a national and regional perspective to these extremely local scenarios and conflict drivers.

The Sangin Accord in a wider social and political context

Members of the Alikozai tribe had been used to a degree of patronage and support in the higher echelons of Afghan political society, positioning and protecting the interests of the local power brokers in Sangin within the wider national context. Chief among these were Mullah Naqib (also known as Naqibullah) from Kandahar's Arghandab valley, and Daoud Mohammad Khan (DMK – also known as Amir Daoud, or Amir Dado) in Helmand.[681] The legacy of such leaders is disputed, but there is little doubt that for the Alikozai in Sangin, tribal unity – already damaged by the loss of local elders in the spring 2007 uprising – was further weakened by the death of Mullah Naqib from a heart attack in late 2007. DMK's killing in 2009 also denied them a political patron in Kabul (he was an MP at the time of his death, having moved to Parliament after service as Helmand's intelligence chief).[682] This compromised the tribe's ability to hold on to their ancestral lands, though "having well-defined tribal boundaries seems to be an important stability factor from which the Alikozai have benefitted greatly."[683] Recent sources reconfirm their political significance: "Mullah Naqib and Amir Daud had very good connections with Afghan Government and they solved the problems of Alikozai people very quickly. The death of these two figures [had] very negative effect[-s on] the Alikozai people."[684]

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[681] On DMK, see chapters 3 and 4, and Coghlan, 2009, o*p. cit.* On Mullah Naqib, see for example Peter Greste, "Profile: Mullah Naqibullah," 7th December 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1697171.stm(accessed 11th July 2015). For a general overview of the Alikozai's position and history, including references to both leaders, see Tribal Analysis Center, 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/PDF-TAC/Alikozai%20Tribal%20Dynamics.pdf.

[682] On Naqib's heart attack: Sarah Chayes, "A Mullah Dies, and War Comes Knocking," 18th November 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/16/AR2007111601204.html(accessed 11th July 2015). ; BBC, 19th March 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7952333.stm. DMK's death: ibid.

[683] Tribal Analysis Center, "The Quetta Shura: A Tribal Analysis," 2009, http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/PDF-TAC/Quetta%20Shura.pdf(accessed 11th July 2015).

[684] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

The two men were clearly powerful and ruthless (and so useful if a decline in visible security indicators was considered a priority). Some suffered at their hands, and so the specific local context had deep significance for the perceived legitimacy of these individuals: "Khan and his brother Daud had weapons, and power in Sangin District, but they didn't disturb the local poor people, their target was only the opium traffickers."[685] Others considered such unreformed warlords unwelcome: "powerbrokers like Sher Mohammad Akhundzada, Abdul Rahman Jan, Mir Wali and Daoud Mohammad Khan did lots of cruelty on the local villagers, and lots of them turned to Taliban."[686] DMK therefore offers a microcosm of the complexities involved for outsiders considering backing, co-opting or partnering with such characters. According to Elizabeth Rubin:

> "As one Western diplomat put it: 'Amir Dado kept his own prison, authorized the use of serious torture, had very little respect for human life and made security worse.' Yet when I [journalist Elizabeth Rubin] later met Amir Dado in Kabul, he pulled out a letter that an officer in the US Special Forces had written requesting that the Afghan Ministry of Defense install him as Helmand's police chief and claiming that in his absence "the quality of security in the Helmand Province has dramatically declined."[687]

Mullah Naqib was the archetypal tribal politician – hedging his bets, focusing always on survival and then on patronage for specific interests. This is partly due to the Alikozai's specific relationship with the Taliban. They were one of the least represented tribes, being absent "from Taliban leadership roles at nearly all levels of the Taliban Movement" apart from (prior to his capture in 2007) Mullah Obaidullah, who was considered at the time to be one Mullah Omar's immediate deputies.[688] Naqib had been the man to "whom the Taliban had handed control of Kandahar when they retreated in 2001 – although he subsequently lost it again to an American-backed rival," and indeed he had handed the city to the Taliban when they first asserted control before 2001, as it had become clear that pragmatism would ensure his

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[685] Primary Source PS-14. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[686] Primary Source PS-6. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013.

[687] Rubin, 22nd October 2006, o*p. cit.*, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/22/magazine/22afghanistan.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

[688] Tribal Analysis Center, 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/PDF-TAC/Quetta%20Shura.pdf. On Obaidullah, see Associated Press, "Taliban Leader 'Captured' in Pakistan," 2nd March 2007, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/mar/02/afghanistan.pakistan.

survival.[689] Nevertheless, his tribe's secure geographical position became a profound concern to the Taliban – perhaps echoing the threat they had faced from Masood in his Panjshir Valley stronghold. The "Taliban appears to have singled it [Naqib's tribe] out for attacks upon its leadership in an attempt to maneuver [sic] more pliable men into leadership positions or to intimidate the Alikozai into accepting Taliban dominance."[690] Within weeks of Naqib's death, Taliban forces exploited the resulting power vacuum; they first attacked, and then headquartered themselves in Naqib's house for maximum psychological effect.[691] This was a tactic designed to cement political fragmentation. President Karzai tried to counter this by intervening personally in the Alikozai's succession deliberations, placing a silver turban on the boyish head of Kalimullah Naqibi (the tribal elder's 26-year-old son) – an event which for one senior Afghan (Alikozai) General at least represented "the first time ever in Afghanistan that a [new tribal] leader is chosen like this."[692] For one source at least, Naqibullah and DMK were "the leaders of Alikozai tribe in Afghanistan and they could defend their rights in Kabul, Kandahar or other Provinces of Afghanistan. The Alikozai will never find leaders like this again."[693]

This friction between the traditional and the modern leadership, and formal and informal governance mechanisms, was mirrored in Sangin and Helmand as political control shifted and was contested after the failed uprising in spring 2007. The tension was initially defined geographically, with some aspirants based in Sangin and others in Lashkar Gah or other distant urban centres. "The members of the Alikozai council [in Lashkar Gah] couldn't go to Sangin because of security problems, so didn't have direct contact with the people so much."[694] While "those elders who stayed with

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[689] Fergusson, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

[690] Tribal Analysis Center, 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/PDF-TAC/Quetta%20Shura.pdf.

[691] Fergusson, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 41. Also Chayes, 18th November 2007, o*p. cit.*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/16/AR2007111601204.html. The author's interview with American personnel with self-proclaimed personal knowledge of Naqib, in 2010, supported the idea that he had died of cardiac (and perhaps also liver) failure.

[692] Graeme Smith, "Karzai under Fire for His Crowning Gesture," 20th November 2007, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/karzai-under-fire-for-his-crowning-gesture/article586000/(accessed 11th July 2015).

[693] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[694] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

the local villagers together in good and bad situations, and always helped the villagers, are legitimised by the villagers."[695] Sangin's aspiring younger elders knew that action was required to cement their place in the hierarchy, and their interactions with government should be seen in this context: "Alikozai elders in Lashkar Gah, Kandahar, Kabul and other Provinces are maybe more powerful than us and they might be more important for the Afghan Government. We are important now because we made this accord."[696] This local political connectedness was central to the challenge to the old order: "The Alikozai elders from other districts and provinces couldn't organize the meetings with Taliban commanders [in the Upper Sangin Valley], so without the Sarwan Qala elders, the Sangin Accord was not possible."[697] This intra-tribal struggle for political control was accelerated by the policies of the Afghan Government; "when Gulab Mangal came to Helmand as governor, he ordered the tribal councils in Lashkar Gah to stop"[698] asking all the "different tribes to have their shuras in their district not in Lashkar Gah city."[699] This coincided with efforts to formalise district-level governance, and (as far as possible) to co-opt informal political power structures into the formal Kabul-led state administration at that level. One government insider expresses the rationale clearly: "Those who worked with us on that accord were all living in the district beside their people. There were lots of other Alikozai leaders in Lashkar Gah but we knew that they didn't have as much influence."[700]

Making the Sangin Accord

From 2001 onwards, the characteristics of the local Afghan Government evolved significantly. The earliest years after Hamid Karzai's election as President saw the position of District Governor used openly to install individuals loyal to the higher-

[695] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. Also PS-1.
[696] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[697] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[698] Primary Source PS-15. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[699] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[700] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

level power brokers Karzai relied up on restore control in Helmand. Sangin's early governors were relatives of the Alikozai strong man, DMK. Anecdotal reporting suggested that Provincial Governor Wafa installed an Ishaqzai rival as District Governor after DMK's brother (and a former Sangin District Governor) was killed. This residual tribal enmity was likely part of the reason for the failure to support the Alikozai's uprising in 2007.[701] As the potential for political outreach increased, the key characteristic for a governor became their relative acceptance by non-state power structures, and whether they had communication channels to those power brokers who were not prepared to engage directly with the Kabul administration. In north Helmand, the picture was complex: one elder said "we have different kinds of elders' councils in Sangin District, there is an Alikozai council, there is an Ishaqzai elders' council, and there is [the official government] district council which mixes all tribes. All these councils are not formal and the negotiation or the agreements of these councils are not a formal agreement."[702] Trust and credibility remained key values, because "promises were made face to face and were not recorded."[703] Field research by Stuart Gordon in 2007-8 showed that in Sangin 96% of respondents expressed no confidence in the Afghan Government, suggesting either a failure to engage, or compete, with the elders councils, or an inability to deliver upon pledges made.[704]

Until 2008, all governors are believed to have been from the rival Alikozai or Ishaqzai tribes, illustrating the importance locals placed on co-opting the formal government as a faction into their struggle for local control. Faisal Haq (as a Popalzai tribesman) broke this pattern in mid-2008, apparently having been suggested personally by Ahmad Wali Karzai, the President's half-brother.[705] Haq was far from the honest broker, however, and had both enemies and supporters in Sangin District.

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[701] Anecdotal reporting from local elders, collected during the author's time in Sangin, 2009-10. For an account of the attack, see Chayes, 18th November 2007, o*p. cit.*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/16/AR2007111601204.html.

[702] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[703] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[704] Stuart Gordon, *Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan's Helmand Province* (Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, 2011), p. 47.

[705] Anecdotal reporting from local elders, collected during the author's time in Sangin (2009-10) suggests that Ahmad Karzai took Faisal Haq to meet the regional ISAF commander in Kandahar and personally introduced him as 'the man who can give you the Sangin Valley.'

People said that one of Haq's main opponents was Haji Bahlol. It was alleged that when Bahlol went to Saudi Arabia to conduct the pilgrimage to Mecca (sometime before 2008, but the exact date is unknown) Faisal Haq conducted a coup in Sangin District killing Haji Bahlol's brother.[706] Anecdotal reporting described that Faisal Haq shot the man in the face at point blank range, and was exiled to Iran by the community, where he sold vegetables in the market (the timeframe for this incident was never given clearly).[707] His return as District Governor, backed by the President's relative, was therefore likely to be contentious. Haq countered this by promoting his alleged central role in the 2007 uprising, so attracting a degree of prestige. Haq's flaws were accentuated by the increasing requirement to run a formal administration, accelerated by international pressure on the Kabul administration to introduce literacy and other standards to raise the barrier of entry for government positions out of the reach of the most divisive warlords, or their proxies. One consequence of the drive to select Afghan Government leaders through a skills-based appointment system was that literate, Soviet-trained administrators were increasingly well-equipped to pass the tests – an educational product of the previous rentier state arrangement with Russia.[708] Some had less legitimacy in the eyes of important parts of the population as a result – such as Alikozai men with mujahidin pedigree who had resisted Russian intervention. This perhaps explains why by June 2012 only 5-10% of District Governor appointments were based on these tests.[709]

Mistrust in government as an institution had other historical roots. Since the amount of land a group owned equated closely to their political influence, the redrawing of the district boundaries in Helmand, enshrined in the 1964 Constitution, had far-reaching consequences. Four districts quickly became 13, along tribal lines in some rural areas. Since that Constitution also introduced voting, the district

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[706] Primary Source PS-17. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013.

[707] Anecdotal reporting from local elders, collected during the author's time in Sangin (2009-10). Since Haji Bahlol and DMK had at one time been allies it is possible that this incident was related to wider disputes between DMK and his rivals. See Courage Services, "Tribal Dynamics in Afghanistan: A Resource for Analysts," UK Government, April 2008, http://stabilityinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/AFGHAN-TRIBAL-DYNAMICS.pdf(accessed 11th July 2015). p. 61.

[708] On the higher education and training elements of rentier states see Rubin, 1992, o*p. cit.*, p. 78.

[709] Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance," US Congressional Research Service, 2012, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21922.pdf(accessed 12th January 2013). p.39.

boundaries as drawn could return the chosen candidates of the more monolithic tribal groupings. This could prevent minority groups from wielding much influence in local District councils, risking dissatisfaction. Brokering across district boundaries to address long standing conflict drivers, while also running a transparent, functioning administration, therefore required a high degree of competence, literacy, and a reputation for impartiality. Haq did not have these qualities, despite his powerful links into communities in the Upper Sangin Valley. On 1st March 2010, literate former Science teacher Mohammad Sharif replaced him as District Governor of Sangin – reportedly after a delegation from Baghran in the far north of Helmand lobbied President Karzai directly.[710] Change had been urgently needed – both the local mayor and District Development Chief (both decent performers) threatened to resign should the governance problems have continued much longer.[711] The provincial authorities enforced the change after "Helmand Deputy Governor Sattar led a substantial delegation from Lashkar Gah to Sangin on 15-17th January [2010] to review governance and security in the district. Sattar was frank in acknowledging the failings on the Afghan side, particularly of local political leadership."[712] Governor Mangal took rapid action, instructing "Sherriff [sic – the new District Governor, who could write simple English, spelt his own name "Sharif"] to build an effective administration and develop relations across the district – including into areas outside GIRoA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] control."[713] The supporting cast was extremely thin, and almost everything rested on the capacity of one man, the District Governor: at that time "only three ministries – Power and Water, Health and Education – [had] full-time representatives in Sangin."[714]

The number of local people coming to meet Sharif in his office outside the ISAF base increased from five to ten Alikozai per day under Haq, to some 60-70 daily, from

[710] Anecdotal reporting from local elders, collected during the author's time in Sangin (2009-10). Details of the changeover: FOI-11: Mangal "removed the previous DG from post on 1st March 2010, appointing a new interim administration; effectively on probation."
[711] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Request 0494-14 - digest, "*Extract from PRT Weekly - Governance in Sangin District*," Undated (but from 2010). Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-10. See Annex A.
[712] Ibid.
[713] FOI-11, 22nd March 2010.
[714] Ibid.

all local groups.[715] Previous governors had "found it very difficult to assuage villagers who sought audiences to air grievances – something Sharif had mastered."[716] Based on two years of observation by the Provincial Reconstruction Team's forward-deployed District Stabilisation Team, these measurements best illustrated the District Governor's potential as a credible representative. Measures like the number of combat incidents were less useful, since a locally driven reduction in violence (as part of conditions-based confidence-building) was likely to attract scrutiny and reprisals from hard-line senior Taliban before trust and confidence, and the substance of any negotiation, matured enough to trigger a public switch in allegiance and activate the corresponding security guarantee.[717] This new leader brought the office of District Governor far closer to the credibility conferred on Upper Sangin Valley leaders by the wider Alikozai-dominated population. Mohammad Sharif began confidence-building dialogue, under the scrutiny of Provincial Governor Mangal. By early spring 2010 no member of the local Afghan Government had yet admitted to meeting the key Alikozai leaders, though some were clearly connected to them, or mistakenly dealing with lower-level proxy contacts. Yet one UK official with direct and deep knowledge of the case reported that, "on 29th May 2010, a formal offer of peace with the Upper Sangin Valley was made by eight of the most influential leaders and was swiftly followed by overtures from tribal groups in the south," in the Upper Gereshk Valley.[718]

The negotiation process

Identifying a negotiating opportunity does not require that it be taken, or signify it is more valid than other policy options, including military operations. The opportunity that led to the Sangin Accord simply provided one policy avenue to "increase the country's overall electricity supply by building a national power grid," since improving the Kajaki Dam – at the top end of the Helmand Valley, to the

[715] District Stabilisation Team staff in Sangin recorded this and other statistics throughout 2010 while attempting to quantify changing political legitimacy.
[716] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Unreferenced, "*Sangin Deputy District Governor on North Helmand District Governors' Conference, GIROA-Elders Dialogue*," Undated (estimated from September 2011). Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-20. See Annex A.
[717] For a review of similar themes, see Kilcullen, 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://literature-index.wikispaces.com/file/view/Kilcullen-COIN+Metrics.pdf.
[718] Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 98, note 24.

immediate north of Sangin District – was a key element of USAID's $5billion plan.[719] The greater priority given then, rightly, to the more populous areas in central Helmand and Kandahar when determining where to send military forces – including newly trained Afghan National Security Force units – increased the potential value of a political agreement at that time. Reinforcing an agreement offered the option to secure Sangin and the road to Kajaki with less military personnel than required by a full military operation in the face of unified resistance. Kabul's Deputy Minister of energy and water Gulham Faruq Qarizada recognised this opportunity, saying of the conflict around Sangin and Kajaki, "this isn't al-Qaeda. These are tribes that don't like each other. I would sit down with these tribes and tell them you want to put another [electricity generation] turbine in. Everyone will get richer, there will be no battle, and everyone will be happier."[720] Sangin's District Governor Mohammad Sharif, supported and directed by Provincial Governor Mangal, approached his political outreach against this strategic backdrop.

The period from May to December 2010 focused on confidence-building and discussions about the substance of a possible agreement: participation in District Government, cessation of hostilities and free access to Kajaki, in return for irrigation and flood defences, security guarantees to protect against 2007-style repercussions, and improvements to schools and health services. Water issues continued to impact on local political dynamics, between the Alikozai and Ishaqzai lands to the south. As part of the Sangin Accord, the District Governor arbitrated water issues between these rivals, with help from the *mirabs* (Afghan stewards of the waterways selected for their political independence), showing intent to widen the agreement to include many tribal and political groups, rather than to ally with just one. The network of vital irrigation canals that began near the village of Jushalay in the Upper Sangin Valley, irrigating nearby Alikozai farmland, eventually flowed past Sangin town into the Ishaqzai-controlled Upper Gereshk Valley. ISAF analysis suggested that this "was the single most important irrigation channel between Sangin and Kajaki, servicing vast areas of

[719] Chandrasekaran, 2012, o*p. cit.*, pp. 305-6.
[720] Ibid., p. 306.

crops."[721] Farm yields for the marginalised Ishaqzai therefore depended directly on their local rivals regulating the water flow fairly.

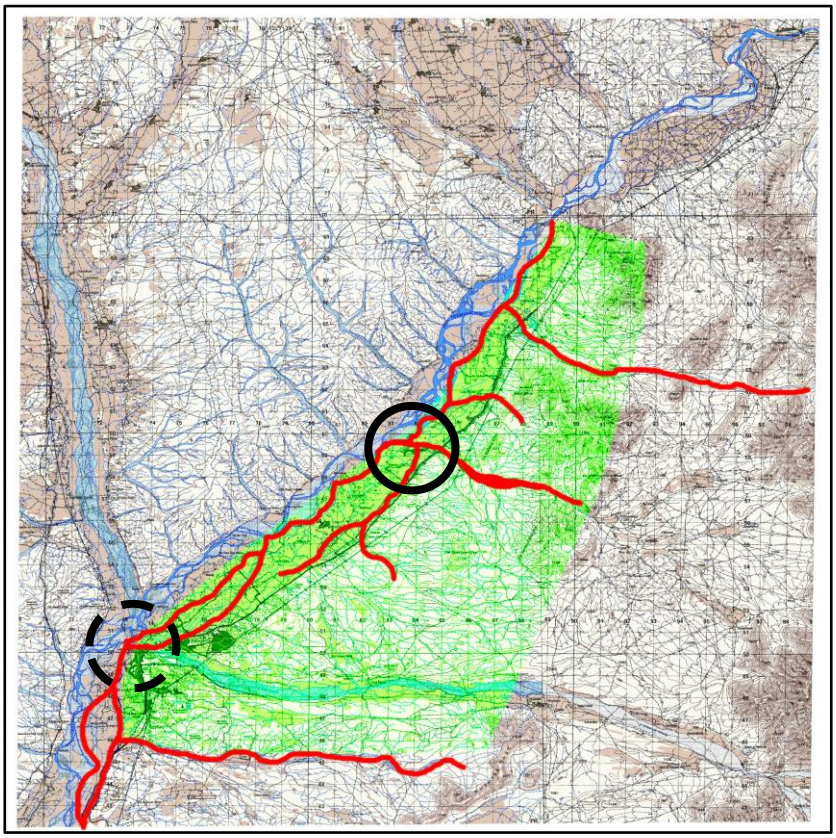

Figure 21: Approximate location of the significant irrigation canals and other offshoots of the Helmand River in the Sangin Valley (added in red by the author). Note the strategic location of Sangin town (marked by the broken circle) and the disputed village of Jushalay (unbroken circle), at the nexus of vital waterways. Base image: Crown Copyright, 2013. Used with permission.

The area of irrigated land dropped considerably between 1979 and 2008, reducing production levels, partly because of the country's constant state of war; Soviet strategy in the 1980s included the destruction of irrigation structures, farms, orchards and livestock.[722] Many had not been renewed, especially in Ishaqzai areas, either due to tribal prejudice or violence against the perceived extension of a predatory government (which also prevented the surveying and contractor access necessary to begin the works). Officials were to acknowledge that "of all Helmand's tribes, the Ishaqzai have historically been the one that has been most disenfranchised

[721] Kemp and Hughes, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 249.
[722] Grau and Gress, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 313.

from government, having suffered particularly under Sher Mohammad Akhundzada when he was Provincial Governor (2001-5)."[723]

Reaction against these perceived threats and inequalities triggered a constant rotation of Ishaqzai fighters into the Sangin Valley, seeking control of the canal nexus, and attempting to disrupt the Alikozai, NATO forces and the government through violence. "Newly arrived from Pakistan, young guerrillas would have a quick crack at FOB [Forward Operating Base] Delhi [the ISAF base in Gereshk], then move on north up the Helmand valley to fight in Sangin."[724] UK officials considered this area even more problematic than Sangin: "the situation in the Upper Gereshk Valley, dominated by the Ishaqzai tribe and a centre of opium production and processing, is arguably more challenging: the largely separate insurgency here is reportedly financed in part by a small number of widely-known Ishaqzai narcotics traffickers who live openly in Kandahar and Lashkar Gah."[725] One of these was Haji Lal Jan, who was later captured in 2012 and promptly transferred from Kabul's maximum security prison to Kandahar from where he escaped, apparently after paying a bribe of $2 million.[726] Anecdotal reporting suggested that Lal Jan owned the large house and land that British forces commandeered and then turned into Forward Operating Base Jackson, the main military camp in Sangin; a mature pomegranate grove was cut down to provide the Helicopter Landing Site, one of the most valuable crops after opium poppy. There may well have been consequences for this placement, but action to address this local issue was complex since Lal Jan believed to live outside Sangin. By the logic of Afghanistan, this would be a direct challenge to the power of narcotics traffickers in the area and appears to have been taken as exactly that; given the intensity of the local fighting,

[723] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, DIPTEL Lashkar Gah (Restricted), "*The Successful District Community Council Election in Helmand's Sangin District Represents a Major Milestone of Progress*," 3rd April 2012. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-21. See Annex A.

[724] Sam Kiley, *Desperate Glory* (A&C Black, 2010), p. 25.

[725] FOI-11, 22nd March 2010.

[726] Afghan Bios, "Who Is Who in Afghanistan? Haji Lal Jan Ishaqzai," 2012, http://www.afghan-bios.info/index.php?option=com_afghanbios&id=3179&task=view&total=23&start=11&Itemid=2(accessed 22nd May 2015).

and the fact that according to NATO officials in 2010 "75% of those fighting do so within 5 kilometres of their home."[727]

In late autumn 2010 US and UK forces operated in Sangin together, doubling the NATO presence (since the incoming US Marine unit was broadly the same size as the departing British one) supported by additional Afghan National Security Forces. British Commander Lt. Col. Paul James was clear that "having a battalion of US Marine Corps, on top of a UK Commando battalion, is frankly decisive."[728] The Provincial and District Governors led a complementary nuanced political approach, building on work begun months and years before. In early January 2011 representatives of the Afghan Government, Upper Sangin Valley Taliban leaders, and the local community witnessed the public announcement of the Sangin Accord.[729]

The terms of the agreement

"Under the agreement, the tribal leaders vowed to expel foreign fighters, allow Afghan and US forces to patrol the area, contain Taliban attacks and help identify deadly roadside bombs. In exchange, American and Afghan leaders are supposed to pump more money into the area."[730] Officials recorded the potential scope of the deal in the diplomatic telegram titled "Afghanistan/Reintegration: Signs Of Progress In The Sangin Valley" dated 14th December 2010, matching the news report quoted above with the addition of specific details on the interaction between ISAF and those changing side, notably that Taliban members would provide "a complete list of all commanders willing to reintegrate and guarantee that they will cease fighting" while ISAF would "release insurgents arrested recently providing there is a guarantee by the

[727] Mark Urban, "Duping of Mi6 Reveals Coalition Flaws," 26th November 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/newsnight/markurban/2010/11/taliban_leaders_duping_of_mi6.html(accessed 12th July 2015). See also The Guardian, "US General McChrystal Approved Peace Talks with Fake Taliban Leader," 26th November 2010, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/26/us-general-mcchrystal-taliban-impostor(accessed 27th July 2010).

[728] The Australian, "Britain Stirs Clan Lords to Fight the Taliban," 14th August 2010, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/britain-stirs-clan-lords-to-fight-taliban/story-e6frg6so-1225905055147(accessed 24th May 2012).

[729] Zainullah Stanikzai, "Ceasefire Agreed in Sangin," 2nd January 2011, http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/01/02/ceasefire-agreed-sangin(accessed 23rd May 2014).

[730] Dion and Hashim Shukoor Nissenbaum, "US Marines Report Peace Deal with Tribe in Afghan Hot Spot," 3rd January 2011, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24606376.html(accessed 11th January 2013).

elders that they would not again take up arms" and "undertake not to harass former insurgents and grant them immunity from arrest for insurgency-related offences."[731]

Afghan perceptions of the terms of the deal are fairly consistent. In addition to allowing those "who were involved in this agreement to keep their weapons for defending their area and for their own security," the priorities were the extension of public services like health and education in Sangin, protection for local communities from outside security threats [i.e. Taliban repercussions], and a promise to asphalt the main road from Sangin to Kajaki – a key step in the Kajaki Dam hydroelectricity project known as the Kajaki road for locals, and Route 611 by ISAF.[732] The poor quality of this road (a "pot-holed, rocky track"[733] in 2006) was recognised as a problem as far back as 2005, but the issue then was finding "a road expert who knew how to do quality work with [unskilled] manual labour" since the rains typically washed away all but the most hardy of repairs each spring, and ISAF had little spare engineering capacity at that point.[734] On the Taliban side, local sources understood that "the [Alikozai] Taliban offered to stop their cooperation with the Taliban in Quetta; they will show all IED locations; they will not attack ISAF and Afghan forces and they will not let foreign Taliban enter Sarwan Qala."[735] While "Afghan officials and US diplomats hailed the deal as a sign of how the promised carrot of reconstruction aid could lead to reintegration Marine officers saw in the change of heart the power of the stick."[736]

It is perhaps unsurprising for commanders to consider military actions as the dominant motivation for political shifts. Behind the scenes, other complementary social and political forces were also at work. Both elements were necessary and mutually supporting. Since early 2010, the District Governor challenged self-

[731] FOI-14, 14th December 2010.

[732] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.
Also PS-14: the "Afghan government promised that they will take over the security of the Taliban who joined to the Afghan government, and will start reconstruction like making of schools, clinics, roads, canals."

[733] Bishop, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 4.

[734] Hafvenstein, 2007, o*p. cit.*, pp. 247-8.

[735] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. PS-2: "the Alikozai elders promised that Taliban will demine the main roads." PS-14: "After the accord, the Taliban will support the Afghan and international troops and will not let other Taliban fighters from other districts and provinces to come in Sarwan Qala." PS-1: "they promised never to let the foreign Taliban to come to their area."

[736] Chandrasekaran, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 283.

proclaimed power brokers to demonstrate their control over local fighters and IED networks by reducing activity, to build confidence and validate the credibility of the interlocutors.[737] "'We have been pushing for this for 12 months', said Colonel Paul James, commander of 40 Commando battlegroup, stationed in Sangin. 'The tribes have responded positively. They are certainly not fighting us.'"[738] In March 2010 (long before surge forces reached north Helmand in numbers), the BBC reported "the Taliban Civil Commission, the Taliban's unofficial government in Sangin apparently feels it is not in the movement's interest to attack the reinvigorated bazaar [market place]."[739] Indeed in Sangin "violence had started to decline before Western and Afghan forces mounted offensives. From up to 30 Taliban attacks a day at the end of June, there are now fewer than half a dozen raids daily. On July 29 [2010], there were no attacks."[740] This picture of lengthy ground work spanning a year or more was countered by one official report, suggesting that higher authorities were "aware of contacts going back at least 5 months, but had not seen evidence they were proving fruitful."[741] The local view appeared more confident that these indicators were evidence of more constructive behaviours signalling potential for a change in political outlook and allegiance.

Daoud Ahmadi, a spokesman for the Helmand governor, said several other factors had contributed to the political shift. "One was the replacement of government officials in Sangin after a 20-day consultation with tribal leaders, another was growing revulsion with the Taliban's cruelty, such as the hanging in June [2010] of a seven-year-old child accused of spying for the Western forces."[742] Alongside social and political avenues, combat power (including a blend of static and manoeuvre forces, partnered with Afghans), the impact of military operations outside Sangin, and the knowledge of the impending military surge northwards were likely also significant factors. It is a

[737] Participant observation by the author during service in Sangin (2009-10).
[738] The Australian, 14th August 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/britain-stirs-clan-lords-to-fight-taliban/story-e6frg6so-1225905055147.
[739] Urban, 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/newsnight/markurban/2010/03/the_ingredients_making_sangin.html.
[740] The Australian, 14th August 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/britain-stirs-clan-lords-to-fight-taliban/story-e6frg6so-1225905055147.
[741] FOI-14, 14th December 2010.
[742] The Australian, 14th August 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/britain-stirs-clan-lords-to-fight-taliban/story-e6frg6so-1225905055147.

testament to the bravery and resolve of many Afghan and international personnel alike that some political common ground could be found amidst such an outwardly intractable and violent corner of the world. But a detailed analysis of the motivations behind the agreement – and especially the role of (military) Hurt and the Way Out, as required by Ripeness theory – is necessary before drawing stronger conclusions about the Accord and the factors observed in its genesis. A summary follows below, and a more detailed theoretical analysis is given in chapter seven.

The Sangin Accord: motivations and perceptions

The Sangin Accord could not have been made without military force, nor activated without the prospect of a credible security guarantee for those openly switching allegiance. Two other specific military strands played important supporting roles for the new District Governor's political strategy. First, the overall NATO Commander, General Stanley McChrystal, determined key elements of the military approach in Sangin in the run up to the Accord, issuing guidance in March 2010 that "emphasised the importance of avoiding civilian casualties,"[743] especially at checkpoints and during military road convoys. He also brought the actions of the vast majority of Special Forces [known in the US as Special Operations Forces, SOF] units under his control to reduce the chances that while one unit carried out counterinsurgency another carried out "a raid that might in fact upset progress" without coordinating over the political impact.[744] Despite criticism suggesting this put Western military lives at risk, McChrystal himself was ironclad in his communication to his subordinates that "nothing has changed to limit your right or responsibility to defend yourself."[745]

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[743] Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 93.

[744] Richard A. Oppel Jr., "Tighter Rules Fail to Stem Deaths of Innocent Afghans at Checkpoints," New York Times, 26th March 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/27/world/asia/27afghan.html?_r=0(accessed 18th July 2015).

[745] Ibid. For criticism, see for example Thomas Harding, "'Courageous Restraint' Putting Troops Lives at Risk," The Telegraph, 6th July 2010, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/7874950/Courageous-restraint-putting-troops-lives-at-risk.html(accessed 18th July 2015). This article includes a scenario from Sangin where Lt. Col. Paul James, commanding officer of 40 Commando Royal Marines, ruled out launching an air strike on 15 locals digging in an IED (improvised explosive device): "I chose not to strike them because that

In Sangin, the local application of McChrystal's instructions reduced the military impact on the population's daily life largely by forcing units not based in the district to increase communication with those who were based locally and in touch with the Provincial or District Governor's political strategy before launching operations into Sangin. This had a significant positive impact, since as one of the most violent districts in Afghanistan, with significant narcotics and insurgent activity in the rural safe havens, it was one of the highest priority targets for specialist operations in the entire country. Combining this with safer interactions between military patrols and local people in the urban areas (especially where either or both parties included vehicles – at greater risk to soldiers in some cases)[746] improved the trust local people had in the existing social structure, based on predictability and stability.[747] It is important to consider that predictability could also relate to life in areas outside NATO control, and so an absence of NATO-led security did not always hinder political evolution. For example, a high and ever-present level of intimidation, and a reduction in disturbance, both allow a greater evaluation of life in contrast to Afghan Government controlled areas, with either potentially resulting in a desire for negotiated progress. Temporary patrols, if resulting in contested residential areas, could divert discussion to the conduct of the international forces rather than the calibre of the Taliban offer. Nevertheless, a high tempo of better targeted raids "against narcotic-trafficking and improvised explosive device laboratories impressed locals"[748] and showed that "ISAF could strike, in a surgical manner, wherever it wanted."[749] This was a positive evolution from earlier times in which, despite best efforts, the impact of such activity was more problematic locally. One commander felt ISAF's key "mistakes were the killing of innocent villagers by their airstrikes, bombing and night raids. They conducted operations or airstrikes with misreports from their spies or translators, without checking the reports, and killed

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would have been 15 fathers of 15 sons who would almost certainly have been driven into the insurgents' arms. You could also not rule out who was foe or who was curious onlooker."

[746] Harding, 6th July 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/7874950/Courageous-restraint-putting-troops-lives-at-risk.html.

[747] In theoretical terms this is a key facet of ontological security. See Giddens, 1984, o*p. cit.*, p. 50, p. 375.

[748] Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.*, p. 94.

[749] Ibid.

innocent people."[750] Targeted raids by specialist forces and subtle ground-holding in tandem supported political change, when targeted effectively, and increased the perception that the Afghan political authorities could affect ISAF's military conduct and operations – boosting the legitimacy and accountability of the Afghan Government.

What were the central motivators for agreement?

While local issues were undeniably the focus of the Sangin Accord, one source recognised the wider scope into which negotiations fitted. For him, "America [was] leading the fighting and the solution for making Afghanistan is also with the Americans. When the Americans tell both sides to fight, both sides are fighting, and when the Americans say to negotiate, both sides start negotiations."[751] It is possible that this individual followed the changing public discourse outlined earlier, and recognised the move towards a national reconciliation (the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation program, APRP, had launched in late 2010). Nevertheless, this is an anomaly, and most sources describe a desire to exclude foreigners from their territory, following a thread that ISAF and government officials had seen before, in Sangin and Musa Qala in 2006, and across Afghanistan. "The Taliban said that they didn't want the ISAF troops to come to Sarwan Qala after the agreement, they wanted only the Afghan army" to provide the security guarantee they had lacked in 2007, in case of repercussions.[752] In late 2010, this demand was dropped, leaving a core of mutually beneficial outcomes available for the taking. An elder captures the opportunity, noting that if everyone "was honest, I think the accord would [have given] a positive result. The Afghan Government would have control of Sarwan Qala without any fighting and killing, Taliban commanders with their fighters would have better lives without airstrikes, and Alikozai elders would have a secure area, with lots of construction."[753]

For much of 2010 communication continued, largely by hand written notes or telephone, facilitated by local elders endorsed as trustworthy after they brought a

[750] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[751] Primary Source PS-13. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[752] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. Also PS-4.
[753] Primary Source PS-15. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

letter from Taliban commanders in Sarwan Qala confirming they were authorised to speak for them.[754] An Afghan Government official directly involved in the Accord negotiation quotes a senior Taliban commander involved on the other side, who said "our goal was only to keep the security of our areas and keep them safe from the cruelties of the foreigners and of the local government."[755] While this may have been a pervading narrative justifying conflict, Taliban representatives persisted with a broader, but conflicting agenda: both that foreign troops shouldn't come to Sarwan Qala but also that complex canal repair works – completely beyond Afghan Government ministries – must be provided. Provincial Governor Mangal reacted strongly, "and said without ISAF, construction is impossible in Sarwan Qala."[756] This suggests a more complex range of factors affected the opening of negotiations than merely Hurt: a more nuanced view is supported by seven interviewees. They corroborate the fact that bargaining over a key local religious leader was also influential, suggesting that "when the negotiations became serious, Governor Mangal agreed to release Mullah [named removed]" as a confidence-building gesture.[757]

Afghan Government officials were content that the request for a single prisoner represented a legitimate confidence-building measure. Elsewhere, political bargaining had included demands for large numbers of fighters and commanders to be returned: the "Taliban didn't have lots of demands for the negotiation. They were not like other Taliban asking for the release of 20 or 50 Taliban commanders. Their only demand was the release of Mullah [****]."[758] In this case therefore, the prisoner's release was perceived to signify a shift in genuineness which in turn suggests that this was an important step in solidifying the Way Out: "when the negotiation became more

[754] PS-4: "the Taliban appointed us as their representatives and with a letter they introduced us as their representatives for negotiation [with the Afghan government]." Also PS-15.
See also Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.* Greater detail of the communication timeline is available in Cavendish, 2014, o*p. cit.*, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/snatching-defeat-from-victory-how-isaf-infighting-helped-doom-sangin-to-its-ongoing-violence.
[755] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013. Also PS-4.
[756] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. This echoed the similar issues surrounding the HAVA river basin works in the 20th century, described earlier.
[757] Ibid. Confirmed by PS-8, PS-10, PS-11, PS-12, PS-13, PS-15, PS-16.
[758] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

serious, the Alikozai tribe asked Governor Mangal to release Mullah [****]."[759] The significance of this prisoner offers strong evidence in favour of politically and culturally aware detention operations. Only three Afghan sources shed light on Mullah [****]'s capture, and there are no public records or official documents available to confirm or deny these assertions. The first identifies the Mullah as "an Alikozai Taliban commander arrested by the Afghan National Army and later handed over to the NDS [National Directorate of Security] office in Helmand Province," though no timeframe is given.[760] The second recounts that the "Afghan army arrested Mullah [***] around 4 months before the Accord [i.e. August/September 2010]."[761] The third describes that "just two weeks before Gulab Mangal contacted the Sarwan Qala elders, an important Taliban commander who was called Mullah [****] was captured by Afghan forces."[762] A vital question cannot be answered with the sources available, which would shed great light on the extent to which this was orchestrated or accidental. Was the Mullah's identity known before his arrest, and so planned and designed to apply leverage to the elders as they waivered over negotiation, was it coincidental? Are the estimations of timeframe, and assumptions that the events were consciously linked, false?

Much depends on the Mullah's true identity, and evidence from ISAF, which is not available here. The primary sources are clear that he was associated with the Taliban organisation, and there are limited similarities between his apparent identity and a man added to the United Nations sanctions list: one of the aliases given matches that used for the Mullah in all sources (though there are other differences).[763] When questioned on this potential cross-over, only one source responded, and was unequivocal in discounting the correlation: "Mullah [****] has lived for more than three decades in [different place to that mentioned on the sanctions list]. The person

[759] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[760] Ibid.
[761] Primary Source PS-15. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[762] Primary Source PS-13. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[763] Specific references and further source details are withheld to protect the identity of the individual.

that you [the interviewer] mentioned is completely different."[764] What is clear is that the Mullah had other longer-standing characteristics that afforded him deep credibility, and so made him useful as a conduit for community influence. Recalling from chapter two that the Sayeds are believed to be the purest descendants of the Prophet Mohammed, "people respected Mullah [****] very much because he is from the Sayed Tribe, and his family is the only Sayed family in that area."[765] Local people "always come to his father's shrine to pray" and this contributed to the son also becoming "a respected man among the villagers; he was also an important Taliban commander in Sarwan Qala."[766] This man's release was reported to be the essential action that, for the Alikozai Taliban, "assured them that Afghan Government is honest for negotiation."[767] Importantly, it also boosted the elders as mediators, and indicated that the time for "face-to-face negotiation has started."[768] As a counter, it would also have shown the Sangin Alikozai Taliban's ability to influence ISAF and the Afghan Government, perhaps boosting their credibility in some eyes. This shows the complexity of theoretical and practical analysis based so heavily on subjective judgements.

Participant observation from Sangin shows that the confidence-building stage, between District Governor Mohammad Sharif's first communication through proxies and the first formal face-to-face group meeting to consider the terms of a proposed agreement took at least nine months – from his appointment on 1st March 2010 until mid-December 2010.[769] Throughout this time, proxy communication through the

[764] Primary Source PS-17. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013.

[765] Primary Source PS-16. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed.

[766] Primary Source PS-12. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-13: "Mullah [***] was very religious man and had lots of people as supporters."

[767] Primary Source PS-16. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed. Also PS-3: from then, the "Taliban commanders believed that Afghan government really wanted peace and negotiation."

[768] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also from the same source: "When Mullah [****] was released then the elders also found lots credit with the Taliban commanders."

[769] Participant observation from the author's time in Sangin 2009-10, confirmed by conversations with other personnel during and after the events. See also Weatherill, 2011, o*p. cit.* and Cavendish, 2014, o*p. cit.*, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/snatching-defeat-from-victory-how-isaf-infighting-helped-doom-sangin-to-its-ongoing-violence.

mediating elders and – eventually – direct conversations via telephone, were the only method to build a personal rapport. Trust and legitimacy depended on demonstrating the District Governor's impact on the military and stabilisation actions taken by international and Afghan Government personnel. Underpinning this delicate web of relationship-building were invaluable longer-standing social and political links. This endorsed the immense value shown in the case study of understanding interpersonal obligations, loyalties and bonds – and having the access and credibility to request their application to conflict resolution. One key elder sums this up: "the main factor was that we [the elders and the Alikozai Taliban] knew each other from a long time before and that was the reason that they didn't reject us."[770] In the case of the Sangin Accord, these ties ran very deeply, and included links to the most senior members of the Taliban organisation based in Pakistan: "those Taliban commanders in Sarwan Qala who agreed to make an accord had direct contact with Quetta Shura."[771]

Closer to home, in Sangin District, family ties drove the shape of the Sangin Accord, both leading up to and after the deal. "There was a relative of Mullah [**** - the prisoner released as part of the Accord, as outlined above] who was called [****].[772] He was involved in the negotiation with the Afghan Government; in fact he was one of the encouragers of the elders in that negotiation."[773] Following the Accord, its implementation involved pledges to increase representation in the ANSF, providing they remained on hand to provide security in the local area. This again highlighted the importance of securing support from the influential local characters: "one of Mullah [****]'s brother, who is called Mullah [****] was commander of the local police in the area. He was with the Taliban before but later joined the Afghan Local Police."[774] The Mullah's membership of the Sayed tribe was powerful, since as "this tribe is much

[770] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[771] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[772] Confirmed by participant observation to be an Alikozai Taliban commander, and the key intermediary for the Afghan District Governor.
[773] Primary Source PS-17. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013.
[774] Ibid.

respected among every tribe and nationality"[775] the local "people obeyed him, and whatever [****] said, people accepted that as a message from their religious man."[776] The importance of co-option or reconciliation with religious figures is therefore a key lesson from this case study.

The Accord itself entered a new stage on 13th December 2010, when a delegation of some 20 elders and Taliban representatives met the Sangin District Governor in the town.[777] An official report records that these people, "representing the entire valley from the District Centre up to the Kajaki Dam, had reached a tentative agreement with the Government of Afghanistan."[778] A second meeting two days later advanced the discussion into specifics, though international officials anticipated that "the 15 December shura would continue well beyond that date as the detail of the agreement was hammered out."[779] The eventual deal was announced at a public meeting on 4th January 2011, where "tribal elders presented the Afghan Government and coalition leaders a document signed by seven Taliban commanders who agreed to follow the direction of the elders. In exchange, the elders reiterated that Afghan forces should lead searches of area compounds, that all patrols in the area are partnered and requested commitments to short-term and long-term reconstruction and development projects."[780] Implementing the Accord would be tricky and there would be significant challenges involved with controlling perceptions of adherence to the terms of the Accord, and trust in the implementing partners. Officials were mindful of this complexity, noting that "negotiations elsewhere have involved a demand that ISAF/ANSF stay out – this should not be part of any agreement. Equally, if ISAF/ANSF

[775] Primary Source PS-7. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[776] Primary Source PS-9. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[777] Participant observation, confirmed by District Stabilisation Team notes seen and contributed to by the author.

[778] FOI-14, 14th December 2010.

[779] Ibid.

[780] ISAF Joint Command, 2011, o*p. cit.*, http://www.rs.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/afghan-coalition-leaders-broker-peace-deal-in-sangin.html. It is interesting that this request was made, since it was already official ISAF policy: see ISAF, *ISAF Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) Partnering Directive* 29th August 2009. It is possible that the volume of Western troops surging into that area raised additional concerns from elders – Cavendish quotes the ISAF Regional Commander who reported that Special Operations Forces were "out wreaking havoc in the boon docks" in late 2010. Cavendish, 2014, o*p. cit.*, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/snatching-defeat-from-victory-how-isaf-infighting-helped-doom-sangin-to-its-ongoing-violence.

are attacked, or take military action in the valley, it should not be seen as voiding any agreement."[781] The extent to which these sorts of expectations were agreed and communicated widely, or imposed or assumed, affects the resilience of an agreement, and elements of a Ripe Moment. For Taliban members not aware of the precursors to the deal, "it was very shocking news and I am sure it was also a shocking news for all the Taliban commanders and fighters in Helmand Province."[782] The Sangin Accord resonated sufficiently to merit a statement by the Taliban movement's spokesman Qārī' Yūsef Aḥmadī. He said "the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan refutes these baseless claims of the enemy. Those media outlets which have published the report or are publishing it now, commit violation of [the] journalistic code. [The enemy] resorts to disseminating some fatuous and unbelievable reports every day and week, so our astute people and the Mujahidin should not allow the enemy to succeed in these schemes."[783] If this indicated that the Sangin Accord created some desirable political impact, that sentiment was echoed by the Provincial Government. In follow up meetings with international officials, Helmand's Governor Mangal reportedly saw "the Sangin Accord as a model for wider outreach efforts across the province – particularly his nascent attempts to negotiate with the Ishaqzai tribe in the UGV [Upper Gereshk Valley] and the Alizai who dominate Kajaki."[784] This impact on wider policy suggests that the case study is significant enough within the recent campaign to merit further analysis of the negotiating process underpinning the Sangin Accord, using Ripeness theory as an explanatory tool.

[781] FOI-14, 14th December 2010.

[782] Primary Source PS-7. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[783] Jihadology.net, "New Statement from Qārī' Yūsef Aḥmadī, the Spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan: Regarding the Rumors of Ceasefire in Sangin District," 5th January 2011, , http://jihadology.net/2011/01/05/new-statement-from-qari-yusef-a%E1%B8%A5madi-the-spokesman-of-the-islamic-emirate-of-afghanistan-regarding-the-rumors-of-ceasefire-in-sangin-district/(accessed 29th July 2015).

[784] FOI-19, 20th June 2011. Mangal had conducted three meetings with the Ishaqzai since 1 January, "warning them that they too should negotiate a similar agreement, or risk being left behind": Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 648/11, "*Sangin - Latest Developments*," 12th January 2011. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-15. See Annex A.

CHAPTER 7: EXPLAINING THE SANGIN ACCORD

This chapter assesses the detailed history of the Sangin Accord, set out for the first time in this thesis, for evidence of Ripeness theory's explanatory capacity. It begins by reviewing the impact of the older history described in earlier chapters upon the constituent elements of a Ripe Moment: an MHS and a Way Out, perceived by all conflict parties simultaneously (shown on the diagram repeated below).

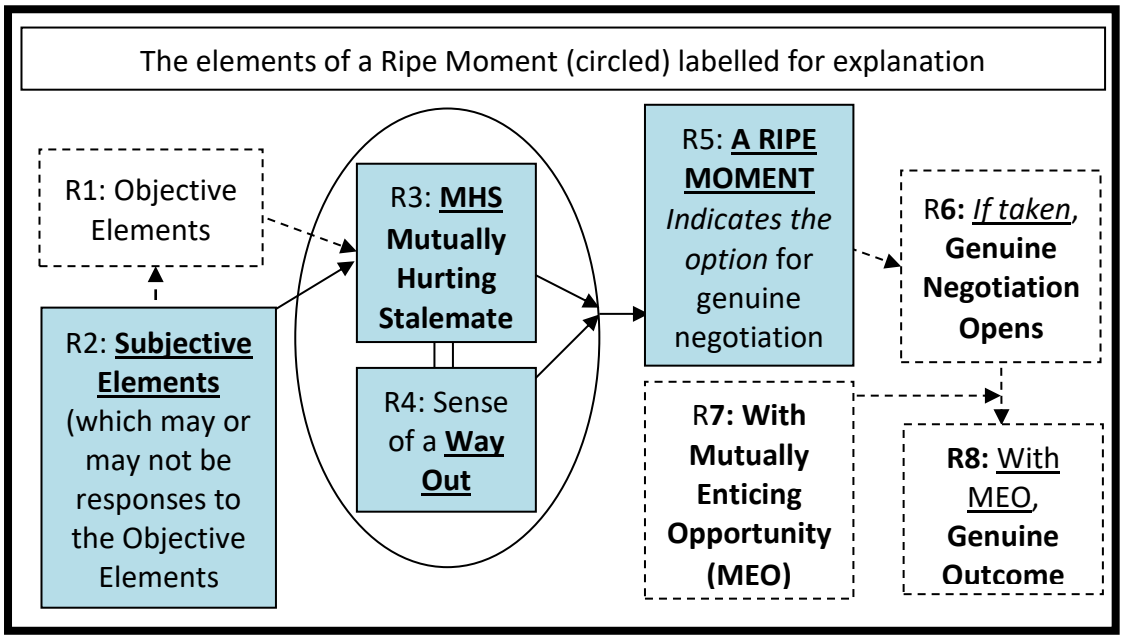

Figure 22: The key elements of a Ripe Moment (circled) labelled for explanation.[785]

This analysis draws out areas of conceptual difficulty with the way Ripeness theory considers the boundaries between conflict parties, and the rationality that is assumed to drive their decisions and perceptions about negotiation. This discussion illustrates the implications of culture on the ability to identify the intent of negotiators (and therefore the genuine motivations central to the Way Out); the potential for individual or group trauma to alter both historical memory and rationality, for specific conflict parties. The explanatory value of Zartman's theory is then shown, for more recent events and the perceptions directly relating to the Sangin Accord, as set out in chapters four, five and six. Observations upon the MHS, Way Out and Ripe Moment are given. The implications for scholarship and further research are summarised in the concluding chapter.

[785] The diagram is a repetition of that shown in Figure 8 in chapter 1.

The relationship between history and Ripeness theory

Questioning rationality

Ripeness theory relies on a model of rationality and decision-making unaffected by the specific impact of history and local cultural factors the conflict parties. In this Zartman perpetuates "negotiation theorists' dismissal of the effect of culture" which "springs from the assumption that there is a single, universal paradigm of negotiation" underpinned by instrumental assumptions of rationality.[786] Zartman's theory focuses directly on the moment that negotiations begin, but does not make any effort to describe the conditions that indicate dialogue has evolved into negotiation, nor to outline the level of formality that defines that threshold between other types of verbal exchange and negotiation. As will be shown later in this chapter, the history of the Sangin Accord suggests that this requires review, since the debate over when negotiations become formal – and by implication, genuine – in central to analysis of the presence (or not) of a Ripe Moment in the case study. The assessment is clouded by differences between local Afghan practices and Western norms about the boundaries between communication and negotiation, and also how an MHS or a Way Out is perceived by each party.[787] Since Ripeness theory lacks any recognition that cultural or historical factors may mean the different conflict parties do not share the same perception or understanding about when genuine negotiations for conflict resolution are underway, the theory compels analysts to conclude that the cause is the absence of the a Ripe Moment. This makes Ripeness problematic for explaining the Sangin Accord, where addressing those same local factors had significant implications for the timing and substance of the agreement, but also on the local people's decision to engage in formal negotiations.

To apply Ripeness theory literally to the case study therefore requires us to exclude the impact of longer-term historical legacies including: disputes over land and water access stretching back over 200 years, including with Iran; frequent attempts by

[786] Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating across Cultures: International Communication in an Interdependent World* (US institute of Peace Press, 1997), pp. 215-6.

[787] Winston Churchill perceived differences between British and Afghan actions and beliefs as "irrefutable evidence of the barbaric nature of Britain's adversaries and, concomitantly, the impossibility of sustaining a rational negotiation with them." David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 181.

foreigners to control the Helmand region through partisan relationships with specific tribal groups, including the three Afghan Wars with Britain; poorly implemented irrigation projects with significant impact on power relations and human security, notably the HAVA program in the Helmand Valley, and; military interventions (particularly by the Soviets) accompanied by social and political reform agendas that challenged locally-understood mechanisms and lifestyles. It is impossible to suggest that these events were experienced in the same way by others, or that there was negligible impact upon local assessments of negotiating with a centralising Afghan administration promising reconstruction projects, and backed by foreign military forces. Indeed Zartman himself acknowledges that "frequently conflict involves the resurgence of latent feelings or dormant grievances," but then immediately excludes the impact of these from his theoretical model.[788] Since grievance typically arrives from perceptions of inequality, the historical memory of these events and their outcomes must be significant – but also different from their opponents' – for those who favour reopening conflict.[789]

These challenges to the universal applicability of rationality highlight the challenge facing theorists and practitioners alike to determine whether or not common models and approaches can be applied successfully to multiple case studies. This debate extends back at least as far as British Imperial scholarship. Bethell is one who suggests that the issues facing the territory that we now know as southern Afghanistan had been seen before. He wrote that "there is scarcely an incident in the story of our Indian Frontier that has not its parallel in the 'Debateable Land' which lay between England and Scotland in years gone by."[790] Bayly, in his study of diplomatic perceptions of Afghanistan, makes the important point that "geographic spaces have often been analysed through a structuralist-functionalist lens, which has, in some cases, encouraged ahistorical understandings."[791] General Jonathan Shaw levels the same accusation at the modern campaign, citing "the locals' disbelief at our ahistorical

[788] Chapter 11, "Negotiations and pre-negotiations in ethnic conflict: The beginning, the middle, and the ends" in Zartman, 2007, o*p. cit.*, quote on p. 174.
[789] Berdal and Wennmann, 2013, o*p. cit*; Cynthia J. Arnson and I. William Zartman, *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005); Collier and Hoeffler, 2002, o*p. cit.*
[790] L. A. Bethell, *Tales from the Outposts: Tales of the Border, Vol. 3* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons Ltd., 1936), p. 2.
[791] Bayly, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 1.

efforts in the country."[792] The importance of historical context, and the impact of memories of past events on rationality, is a conclusion that can be applied here to regions within states, such as those – including Sangin – that fall within my earlier definition of fringe areas.

Ahistorical approaches have been applied to the mechanics of state building. If the hallmarks of a functioning state are "understood in terms of their shortcomings vis-à-vis their European contemporaries," then policies that promote local variations, informed by specific cultures, societies or history, would not be considered valid.[793] Our own history contains warnings for those who would seek to export mirror images of strategies, or state functions, and apply them everywhere. Anecdotally, the British experience in Malaya was a common reference point during strategy discussions about counterinsurgency in Helmand between 2009-10, yet a major difference between that campaign and recent events in Afghanistan reduces the significance of imported lessons, since in Malaya High Commissioner Templer "wielded complete control of every aspect of civilian and military life," while in Helmand every effort was made to operate in support of the Host Nation administration.[794] For Sir John Malcolm, the Governor of Bombay (1826-1830), the "greatest error in India appears to have been a desire to establish systems founded on general principles. I have been led, by what I have seen, to apprehend as much danger from political as well as religious zealots."[795] The polar opposite view, however, places enormous information collection and analysis requirements on those seeking to understand progress towards peace. If, as David Kilcullen has written "the imperative is to understand each environment, in real time, in detail, in its own terms, in ways that would be understood by the locals - and not by analogy with some other conflict, some earlier war, or some universal template

[792] Jonathan Shaw, "The Battle over Sangin Should Teach the West Some Vital Military Lessons," 24th December 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/24/battle-sangin-military-lessons-local-realities-afghanistan(accessed 5th January 2016).
[793] Marsden, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 35.
[794] Bishop, 2007, o*p. cit.*, p, 25; ibid. See Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Five* (Faber & Faber, 1977), part 2 on Malaya. Also Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations* (Faber, 1972), chapter 3 on Civil-Relations; Michael Burleigh, *Small Wars, Far Away Places: The Genesis of the Modern World 1945-65* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2013), chapter 6; John A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), section 2.
[795] Cited in Robert Johnson, "Transitions: Britain's Decolonization of India and Pakistan," in *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical, Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Transition, Handover and Withdrawal*, ed. Robert Johnson and Tim Clack, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 88.

or standardized rule set" then an enormous cultural, social and historical record must be accessible, updated, and created through repeated detailed interactions with local people at all levels, and at all points in a conflict.[796] This would require a degree of access and capacity rarely available in fringe areas. Rory Stewart is somewhere in the middle, concluding that "local and regional factors tend to be a far more important determinant of success than the interveners themselves."[797] Determining whether or not local people interact rationally with imported political, military and other organisations, and the norms and mindsets that accompany them, is vital for assessing the explanatory value of Ripeness theory.

Two approaches to assessing rationality offer important evidence here. The first says that rationality exists, but that unexpected actions are the consequences of failing to understand the influences driving a rational choice. The second suggests that traumatic events damage memory and rationality. On failures to recognise rationality, Walter and Snyder conclude that analysts commonly "ignore the calculus of those who face the consequences," glossing over the fact that "fear causes citizens to act on ideas or claims they believe are more likely to be false than true" – for them "this is not irrational, but a rational response to the huge costs of being wrong."[798] This argument is persuasive in the Sangin case, since it is arguably impossible for outsiders to accurately assess the perceptions (and so their impact on a Way Out or MHS) that derive from poverty, near-constant war, the absence of protection from central authorities and the need to respond flexibly to changes in community political and ideological emphasis in order to survive. Equally, it would be extremely difficult for local Afghans to understand the pressures upon international actors, including the impact of domestic political pressure upon decisions that played out in Sangin District.[799] Interactions between these different versions of rationality have parallels in

[796] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 2.
[797] Rory Stewart and Gerald Knaus, *Can Intervention Work?* (WW Norton & Company, 2011), back cover. Complexity expressed in Christopher D. Kolenda, *The Counterinsurgency Challenge: A Parable of Leadership and Decision Making in Modern Conflict* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2012), especially Scenario 4, pp. 79-114.
[798] Barbara F. Walter and Jack L. Snyder, *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 293-4.
[799] For the implications of different strategic views and awareness between operational conflict zones and capitals, see chapters 11 and 12 in Christopher Elliot, *High Command: British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (London: Hurst, 2015).

history, and also extended to policy choices. There were also differences in the way power and influence were understood, especially in rural areas, that affected perceptions of relative strength and of Hurt. "European political ideas elevated the exclusive control of territory as a constituent element of sovereignty."[800] Local Afghan communities on the other hand expected "multiple tributary relationships as a fundamental part of the political order" meaning that aspirants to political control should also, "focus on the visible bestowal of honour, visitation, and expressions of mutual, albeit hierarchical, obligation" rather than near-exclusively on land and its control.[801] Especially for leaders, these variations had significant implications for establishing the mutual trust and understanding required to generate a Way Out. They are also significant for analysts looking to assess accurately whether each conflict party's own actions had the intended impact on the opposition's perceptions required for both an MHS and a Ripe Moment.[802]

The impact of traumatic events on international relations theory, and explanations of political negotiations, is a developing field. While it is commonly known that extreme experiences damage individuals, how trauma affects communities in conflict areas and the rationality of their individual and collective decision-making is little studied. Memory plays an essential role for "making sense of the past while developing an outlook for times to come" while importantly "trauma may affect memory by providing experiences of existential crises that require an intensified engagement with past and future."[803] It is hard not to conclude that the experiences of Helmand's population, and memories of them, were traumatic: individuals involved in the Sangin Accord had direct experience of the Soviet occupation, the civil war, the rise of the Taliban, and the international intervention. Research suggests that trauma

[800] Marsden, 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 28.

[801] Ibid.

[802] On the specifics of Pashtun leadership motivations and approaches to negotiation, see Fredrik Barth, *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans* (Athlone Press London, 1965).

[803] Hannes Hansen-Magnusson, "Memory, Trauma and Changing International Norms: The German Green Party's Struggle with Violence and Its Concern for Humanity," in *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates*, ed. Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte, (New York: Routledge, 2013).

affects ontological security, affecting perceptions of the self, relative to others.[804] International actors had also experienced traumatic events, especially the attacks of 11th September 2001: Becker shows how such trauma affects foreign policy.[805] If memories of those histories – not universally shared with other conflict parties in the case study – caused different conceptions of rationality that were then judged irrational, or prompted genuinely irrational responses triggered by psychological trauma, then actors' ability to perceive a Ripe Moment would also be damaged. This shakes the rational foundation for Ripeness theory.

Challenging the simple categorisation of conflict parties

It is likely that collective trauma, combined with the legacies of history upon perceptions of internationally-backed efforts to establish a centralised and reforming government, affecting local willingness to declare support openly for one side or the other. As a result, in the case of the Sangin Accord, defining the conflict parties is a central challenge, questioning the value of Ripeness theory as an explanatory tool. While Zartman's original theory tends to consider just two conflict parties with a unitary nature (i.e. with no constituent parts), the case study suggests far greater complexity, both from a longer historical perspective but also for events surrounding the Sangin Accord. This is supported by practical research on evolving Ripeness theory, by Coleman and others, portraying "the transition to and maintenance of constructive engagement as a complex psychosocial process for individuals and groups" involving a "multitude of stakeholder experiences, decisions, and actions" that ultimately result in a shift in thinking.[806] Stedman has also criticised the unitary nature of Ripeness, questioning the ability to "perceive or calculate the gains and losses of combat, negotiation, and surrender in terms of the government or insurgency as a whole."[807]

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[804] Alexandria Innes and Brent Steele, "Memory, Trauma and Ontological Security," in *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates*, ed. Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte, (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[805] Douglas Becker, "Memory and Trauma as Elements of Identity in Foreign Policymaking," in *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates*, ed. Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte, (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[806] Coleman et al., 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 54.
See also pp. 55-58 for a detailed list of 17 methods and 111 actions setting conditions for change.

[807] Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980* (L. Rienner Publishers, 1991), p. 26.

Defining the boundaries of the conflict parties in the case of the Sangin Accord is problematic, since it is not clear whether all of the parties engaged in military conflict were formal parties to the agreement. The theory is also immature when considering multi-faceted conflict parties, as is the case for the Taliban. It had local and wider-ranging elements, and formal and informal affiliations and identities, aligned to varying degrees within an unclear and at times fluid organisational structure. Primary sources confirm this complex blend of family, tribe, identity and motivation. Some Alikozai Taliban who were unhappy with the Sangin Accord "were not [in a] position to resist [the] deal publicly, because their families were still there in the middle of the tribe,"[808] risking social repercussions. The tribal unity and strength of the Alikozai at that time is also reported as a reason why "it was pretty difficult for the Taliban to cancel and destroy the agreement."[809] For the American commander with responsibility for Sangin at the time of the Accord, General Richard Mills, "this was primarily an Afghan brokered agreement arrived at in close consultation with local coalition forces," allowing "for security conditions around Sangin similar to those already in place in other parts of the province."[810] This suggests that one approach would be to consider the principal conflict parties for analysis as the Afghan Government and the Taliban, defined by the local level only. In this case, there would be many exogenous parties influencing these two actors, including: the Afghan provincial and national levels of government; higher levels with the Taliban political organisation; exiled political leaders based outside Sangin, and other parties affected by the results of any negotiation – for example, narcotics traders with interests in the territory covered by the Sangin Accord. It would also be necessary to define the (potentially different) relationship between UK and US elements acting in support of the Afghan Government – or to consider all international forces aligned into one coalition, alongside the Afghan Government, and therefore to consider them to hold a shared perception.

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[808] Primary Source PS-29, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Ishaqzai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-29.

[809] Primary Source PS-30, between Undeclared years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Tribe Undeclared tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-30.

[810] ISAF Joint Command, 2011, o*p. cit.*, http://www.rs.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/afghan-coalition-leaders-broker-peace-deal-in-sangin.html.

Aligning Ripeness theory to the realities of the case study is therefore highly complex: the unitary nature of conflict parties is also shown to be insufficient. This manifests itself through great difficulty in determining exactly whose actions are significant, especially for developing the Way Out. Sources also highlight the understandable reluctance in all conflict parties to commit publicly to any sort of political reconciliation process. Taliban and their intermediaries were equally concerned about publicity – it was reported locally at the time that the Taliban's Quetta Shura had a list of those suspected of working with the government or the international presence and exacted extreme punishments on them periodically, including gruesome murder; Malim Yaqoob, described by multiple sources as the leader of the 2007 uprising had been reportedly tied behind a car on a long rope and dragged until dead.[811] Counter to the typical response, which given the threat was not to talk about one's own actions, one source openly claimed to be "the first elder who accepted [Provincial Governor] Mangal's offer to make the Taliban commanders agree to negotiations. I met Governor Mangal secretly in his office in Lashkar Gah."[812] The source recalls that "for more than two weeks the Taliban didn't give us a positive answer; they seemed to agree with negotiations [with the elders] but didn't tell us openly that they agreed to negotiate with Afghan Government."[813] At this point, Afghan Government officials "asked us [the intermediary elders] to bring a letter from the Taliban saying that they were ready for peace negotiations."[814] This eventually led to both sides agreeing to sit together in person, as "face to face [interaction] has more effect then talking over mobile and walkie-talkie."[815] This unveiling of the various groups did create friction, and some elders left, while others who were not involved complained that "the important Alikozai elders in Sangin who are the decision makers were not informed or were not invited by the Afghan Government."[816] One went as far

[811] Participant observation based on multiples sources of anecdotal reporting from the author's time in Sangin (2009-10).
[812] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[813] Ibid.
[814] Ibid.
[815] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[816] Primary Source PS-15. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

as to suggest that "the Afghan Government involved or invited some unknown Alikozai elders from Sarwan Qala."[817]

It is likely, but unproven in the primary source material, that the split in opinion and influence between difference groups stemmed in part from Mangal's instruction to communities to return their political negotiations to the districts rather than hold them in Lashkar Gah.[818] This boosted younger aspiring leaders and isolated those (often of older generations) who were not prepared to travel into the more rural areas, or (on the other side) engage with Kabul's representatives or their intermediaries in ISAF-patrolled towns.[819] This variety of groups, vying for leadership within those mediating and in the Alikozai Taliban, goes some way to explaining the wide variation in explanations of the main motivations for the negotiating parties, and perceptions of their trustworthiness. This again suggests that further research into multipolar negotiation and the sub-division of conflict parties is important. As such, no sources openly acknowledged a desire for formal agreement, though all who commented described the political interactions as more complicated than simply direct relationships between two conflict parties. Elders were considered intermediaries, and respected as trusted individuals: "those elders who were mediating between the Taliban and Afghan Government were very important and influential figures in the area. I trusted the elders and I believed that they would never play a game with the government."[820] The most succinct explanation comes from a single source with no clear affiliation: the negotiation was not a formal negotiation, and not written on paper. The Alikozai elders acted as representatives of the Alikozai Taliban.[821] The official Afghan Government leadership was also reticent to make too much of these overtures. "We didn't want to make it formally. Governor Mangal [said]

[817] Ibid.

[818] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. "Gulab Mangal asked the different tribes to have their local shuras inside of their district not in Lashkar Gah city. Now all the members of the Alikozai shura are from Sangin District and they are living in Sangin District."

[819] "Gulab Mangal asked the different tribes to have their local shuras inside of their district not in Lashkar Gah city. Now all the members of the Alikozai shura are from Sangin District and they are living in Sangin District."

[820] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[821] Primary Source PS-14. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

we are not dealing with another country; it's a deal between the local government and some unhappy brothers inside our Province."[822] A final important implication from the case study derives from the extent to which the conflict parties were in fact perceived as enemies and the question (unresolvable here) of whether this alters Zartman's theoretical model or not: for a second Afghan source, "we were mediating between two sides that were fighting, but we cannot say any side was our opponents."[823]

Implications for the Mutually Hurting Stalemate

Determining whether an MHS exists requires close observation, but far more data is available relating to international military casualties than among Afghan Government and Taliban forces. It is only directly applicable to Ripeness theory if international forces are considered to be one of the conflict parties moving towards negotiation (contradicting General Mills' assessment, above, that this was an Afghan negotiation); or if we aggregate international efforts and the Afghan Government into one conflict party. Recalling chapter one, the definitive characteristic of an MHS is the inability to bear the costs of further escalation strongly implied but not conclusively defined within the theory as military casualties or loss of equipment. Since data on military casualties is the most readily available, and reporting confirms that Taliban and other parties to conflict went to extreme lengths to inflict damage on both international and Afghan forces, it is assessed here.

A tactical switch from conventional attacks towards Improved Explosive Devices heralded some terrible ingenuity from the Taliban, who went to extraordinary lengths to exploit local communities. For example, on 7th July 2007, men paid a young boy to push a cart into a bakers', before triggering a bomb with a phone.[824] IEDs caused increasing casualties, especially stark in the early years: of the 21 men who lost their lives in Helmand in 2006 there was only one instance of death by IED and one by

[822] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.
[823] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[824] Kemp and Hughes, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 250-1.

suicide bomber; in 2008 the insurgents carried out 3276 bombs attacks.[825] Helmand, and Sangin in particular, were focal points for violence: for example, in February 2009, 39 per cent of everything [in terms of violent incidents] that happened throughout the whole of Afghanistan happened in Helmand, while in late 2008 "66% of the command wire [IED] devices in Afghanistan [located or activated] were to be found within 500m of the patrol base in Wishtan," which guarded the eastern approach to Sangin.[826] These vignettes do suggest local Hurt originating in Sangin but they offer just a snapshot. A more comprehensive review, set within the wider campaign, follows.

AFGHANISTAN CASUALTY AND FATALITY TABLES

Number of Afghanistan UK Military and Civilian casualties
7 October 2001 to 31 December 2014

Year [1 2]	Casualties (excluding Natural Causes) [3 4 5 6]		
	Total	Very Seriously Injured or Wounded	Seriously Injured or Wounded
Total	616	306	310
2001	0	0	0
2002	1	1	0
2003	1	0	1
2004	6	3	3
2005	2	2	0
2006	31	18	13
2007	63	23	40
2008	65	27	38
2009	157	82	75
2010	154	80	74
2011	69	34	35
2012	44	23	21
2013	17	10	7
2014	6	3	3
Nov-13	1	1	0
Dec-13	2	0	2
Jan-14	0	0	0
Feb-14	0	0	0
Mar-14	1	0	1
Apr-14	2	1	1
May-14	0	0	0
Jun-14	1	0	1
Jul-14	0	0	0
Aug-14	1	1	0
Sep-14	1	1	0
Oct-14	0	0	0
Nov-14	0	0	0
Dec-14	0	0	0

Source: Initial NOTICAS

Figure 23: Number of Afghanistan UK Military and Civilian casualties 7 October 2001 to 31 December 2014.[827]

[825] Bishop, 2009, o*p. cit.*, pp. 93-4.

[826] Southby-Tailyour, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 40, p. 171.

[827] UK Government, "Official Statistics Op Herrick Casualty and Fatality Tables: 2014," H.M. Government, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/op-herrick-casualty-and-fatality-tables-released-in-2014(accessed 12th December 2015).

2009 and 2010 were the most costly for British personnel, showing that the times leading up to and around the Sangin Accord were the most hurtful for the UK, when considered across the whole area of operations – or as a national contingent. This raises the level of analysis above the local, however, but gives context to Sangin-specific data and demonstrates the intensity of conflict there. There were 3,403 coalition fatalities across the rest of Afghanistan, from 2001-2015.[828] When assessed by year and by province (2001-11), Helmand is by far the most deadly, with 33% of the fatalities nationally across that timeframe (921 of 2761), similar in magnitude to the next three most deadly provinces combined (Kabul, Kunar, and Kandahar).[829] Over the 14 years of conflict, the UK suffered the following levels of annual fatalities: 2001-5; 0, 3, 0, 1, 1 (5 years, total 5); 2006-8; 39, 42, 51 (3 years, total 132); 2009-10; 108, 103 (2 years, total 211); 2001-12; 46, 44 (3 years, total 90); 2013-15; 9, 6, 2 (3 years, total 17), clearly showing the heightened totals in 2009-10.[830] Of the 180 months covered by those records, the most deadly six months (3% of the timespan) – which as set out later in this section were all in 2009 and 2010 – accounted for 15% of the fatalities. Statistics for Sangin District specifically are hard to corroborate, partly because not all fatalities are recorded with the same location terminology: the terms North Helmand, Helmand Province, Sangin District, and Sangin, are all in use.[831] Official statistics on UK fatalities are shown in the table below:

[828] iCasualties.org, "Operation Enduring Freedom: Coalition Deaths by Year, in Afghanistan," 2015, http://icasualties.org/OEF/ByYear.aspx(accessed 12th December 2015).
[829] iCasualties.org, "Operation Enduring Freedom: Coalition Deaths by Province, in Afghanistan," 2015, http://icasualties.org/oef/ByProvince.aspx(accessed 12th December 2015).
[830] iCasualties.org, 2015, o*p. cit.*, http://icasualties.org/OEF/ByYear.aspx.
[831] On US fatalities see for example The Washington Post, "Faces of the Fallen," 2015, http://apps.washingtonpost.com/national/fallen/(accessed 20th December 2015). The search term "North Helmand" returns 400 results, "Sangin District" 70, and "Sangin" 3.

Number of Afghanistan UK Military and Civilian fatalities
7 October 2001 to 31 December 2014

Year [1,2]	Fatalities [3]			
	Total	Killed in Action	Died of Wounds	Other [4]
Total	453	353	51	49
2001	0	0	0	0
2002	3	0	0	3
2003	0	0	0	0
2004	1	1	0	0
2005	1	1	0	0
2006	39	20	1	18
2007	42	36	1	5
2008	51	47	3	1
2009	108	91	16	1
2010	103	80	15	8
2011	46	35	8	3
2012	44	35	5	4
2013	9	7	2	0
2014	6	0	0	6
Nov-13	1	1	0	0
Dec-13	1	1	0	0
Jan-14	0	0	0	0
Feb-14	0	0	0	0
Mar-14	1	0	0	1
Apr-14	5	0	0	5
May-14	0	0	0	0
Jun-14	0	0	0	0
Jul-14	0	0	0	0
Aug-14	0	0	0	0
Sep-14	0	0	0	0
Oct-14	0	0	0	0
Nov-14	0	0	0	0
Dec-14	0	0	0	0

1. Data starts 7 October 2001.
2. The last three months of data are provisional and subject to change
3. Some deaths may not have clearly defined cause information and could be subject to change depending on the outcome of Boards of Inquiry and/or Coroners' Inquest
4. These data include all deaths occurring as a result of accidental or violent causes while deployed and deaths due to disease related causes during the deployment.

Figure 24: Number of Afghanistan UK Military and Civilian fatalities 7 October 2001 to 31 December 2014.[832]

Media reporting, speaking of the forces centred in Sangin, confirmed that in March 2010 "half of all UK casualties occur in this one area of operations, with about one tenth of Britain's forces in Afghanistan deployed in it."[833] An exact analysis is complicated by the fact that the military battlegroup responsible for Sangin at times controlled forces in neighbouring Kajaki District, and so there can be reporting confusion between Sangin town, Sangin District, and the area of operations allocated to the battlegroup based in Sangin. Confirming the number of Afghans killed and wounded – both Taliban and ANSF – is even more problematic, and the direct comparisons required for assessing an MHS are significantly weakened by almost an complete lack of clarity over places, years and dates. A detailed study by academics at Brown University suggests that there were some 40,470 ANSF (23,470 killed, 17,000

[832] UK Government, 2015, o*p. cit.*, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/op-herrick-casualty-and-fatality-tables-released-in-2014.
[833] Urban, 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/newsnight/markurban/2010/03/the_ingredients_making_sangin.html.

wounded), and 50,000 Taliban and other militant casualties (35,000 killed, 15,000 wounded), from 2001-2014.[834]

Verifiable data for Taliban and other casualties in Sangin is not available, so this analysis relies on perceptions from the primary sources. Only once source uses language that correlates closely to the term Hurt, so central to Zartman's theory. One elder had "seen lots of disputes in Sangin District in which both sides killed each other a lot, and at the end, the pain of violence motivated them to negotiate."[835] Others refer to tiredness, aligning with additions to Ripeness theory that offer the "opportunity for improvement, but from a tiring rather than a painful deadlock."[836] One source asserts "that the Alikozai Taliban became tired of fighting and airstrikes; Afghan forces and ISAF forces also became tired of fighting and local villagers in Sarwan Qala were dreaming of peace and no fighting at their area."[837] Another interview highlights an inability to escalate, suggesting a close parallel with the conditions required for part of the Mutual Hurting Stalemate: "both sides were tired of fighting without any result because both sides didn't have that much power to go forward."[838] Sadly, this recollection is not dated, and therefore cannot be correlated with ISAF sources to test the presence of an MHS. These sources offer the most evidence available to test the applicability of Zartman's original theory, and alongside the wider trends, support the premise that military-focused Hurt in Helmand and Sangin was significant within the wider campaign. Across the whole country, the deadliest months (in order) were: June, July and August 2010, followed by August, July and October 2009. Hurt for the international force was therefore highest just after the time of the May 2010 letter just before the Sangin Accord.[839] Core Ripeness theory

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[834] Neta C. Crawford, "War-Related Death, Injury, and Displacement in Afghanistan and Pakistan 2001-2014," 2015, http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2015/War%20Related%20Casualties%20Afghanistan%20and%20Pakistan%202001-2014%20FIN%20%288%29.pdf(accessed 20th December 2015). p. 18.

[835] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[836] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

[837] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[838] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[839] iCasualties.org, "Operation Enduring Freedom: Coalition Deaths by Month, in Afghanistan," 2015, http://icasualties.org/OEF/ByMonth.aspx(accessed 12th December 2015).

would suggest that – from the data available – this is the most likely time for Hurt to trigger negotiations, but without comparable Afghan-focused data is not possible to confirm the presence of an MHS at that time.

Other Afghan interviewees state that [US-led] escalation was itself a motivating factor for agreement. The local element of the ISAF push northwards in summer 2010 was named Operation SANGIN SUNRISE. A local elder felt that "the plan for military action in Sarwan Qala affected the negotiation significantly – the Taliban thought to make a fake agreement with the Afghan Government to prevent the operation."[840] Another explained that the declared intent to bring a large US-UK-Afghan force into the rural areas further up the Sangin Valley ensured that "the Alikozai Taliban in Sarwan Qala feared defeat."[841] This was likely informed by events that took place in spring 2010 further south in Helmand, as "when we [the Afghan Government] launched [military] operations in Marjah and Garmsir, lots of Taliban were killed and those who survived escaped from the district. Then they realized that they cannot defend against our operations [in Sangin]."[842] This was Operation MOSHTARAK, a larger push to consolidate control in the more populous areas of central Helmand.[843] These operations displaced fighters, including to Sangin; local people reported to the District Stabilisation Team in February 2010 that over 70 fighters from Marjah had arrived, and they conducted a complex, sustained, night-time attack on multiple ISAF locations just days later.[844] If perceptions from later in 2010 are prioritised, then (if all

[840] Primary Source PS-15. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[841] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-15.

[842] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

[843] Ian Drury, "British Troops Launch Major Taliban Assault in Insurgents' Heartland," The Daily Mail, 5th February 2010, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1248583/British-troops-launch-major-Taliban-assault-insurgents-heartland.html(accessed 19th July 2015). ; Theo Farrell, "Appraising Moshtarak: The Campaign in Nad-E-Ali District, Helmand," RUSI Briefing Note, June 2010, www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Appraising_Moshtarak.pdf.

[844] Participant observation by the author while in Sangin, February 2010 (date illegible in my notebooks). In addition to other local reports, a numerate and educated Afghan government official screeched to a halt in his car and begged a District Stabilisation Team foot patrol not to go further into the town, urging us to warn ISAF that 70 armed Taliban from Marjah were moving through the area and attacks would occur that night. This proved to be accurate.
An official report assessed that "following the removal of significant Taliban strongholds in Marjah and Mad Ali district in Operation MOSHTARAK, Sangin District represents essentially the last significant safe haven for the Taliban insurgency in the province and provides a key Taliban supply route. There are

international and Afghan Government forces are considered one coalition, and compared to local Taliban) this capacity to bear the costs of renewed military effort and to escalate would disprove the presence of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate and suggest that the Sangin Accord was – for those sources – a conflict management exercise, lacking the genuine intent to resolve the conflict. If constructed in spring 2010 between UK and Afghan forces together in one conflict party, in relation to the Alikozai Taliban as another, then an MHS looks more likely from the case study.

Policy decisions, rooted in ISAF-wide doctrine, may have directly accentuated conditions for a stalemate, assisting in analysis of the MHS (applying additions to Ripeness theory that allow an MHS to be constructed from the aggregate of a range of military and non-military factors). The decision (in line with doctrine to focus on the populous areas) to consolidate and prioritise central Helmand resulted in "economy of force operations in Musa Qala and Sangin,"[845] bringing both towards the definition of fringe areas set out at the start of this thesis. While credible data for Afghan forces is not readily available, the state of the Afghan National Police in Sangin in 2010 suggests and that an assessment of resource levels plays an important part in constructing an MHS.[846] In March 2010 – just before the written offer of peace arrived, and as the District Governors changed over – officials reported that "just 76 Afghan National Police are in place against a *tashkiel* [officially allocated total] of 202, though 33 are expected over the next few weeks from the interim Helmand Police Training Centre (50 others have been in Shah Kariz and the remaining 41 are unaccounted for)."[847] Those allocated to the Shah Kariz militia worked for Musa Qala's allegedly reintegrated Taliban District Governor, Mullah Salaam.[848] An ISAF official with knowledge of the

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signs that Op MOSHTARAK has displaced some insurgents to the area" (quote from FOI-10, Undated (but from 2010).

[845] Southby-Tailyour, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 264.

[846] Low resource levels have been cited as a key reason for failure to achieve the required political outcome in Iraq. This is explained in the context of counterinsurgency theory, rather than negotiation theory, in Warren Chin, *Why Did It All Go Wrong? Reassessing British Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (DTIC Document, 2008), pp. 132-3; Warren Chin, "Colonial Warfare in a Post-Colonial State: British Military Operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan," *Defence Studies* vol. 10, no. 01-02 (2010), p. 242.

[847] FOI-11, 22nd March 2010.

[848] Local assessments on Mullah Salaam's significance vary. "It was a big loss for Taliban." Primary Source PS-28, between 40-49 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Barakzai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - District. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-28.

background reported that "when we disarmed them in 2010 there were 35 of them – given that a fair few were killed in the final battle, others would have fled the district and others would have been on R&R I suspect total numbers were probably around 80."[849] While unconfirmed, that source thought the use of Sangin's ANP allocation was "a combination of pragmatism to get some forces to Shah Kariz [after one of the rare publicised reintegration events in Helmand in nearby Musa Qala] and personal financial interests of the two respective District Governors."[850] With ANP salaries worth around $150/month, if true, these 165 unfilled posts would have been worth some $300,000 per year to whoever drew the salaries. It is likely that the absence of those policemen increased the perceptions of Hurt felt by those aligned with the Afghan Government. This suggests that resource distribution is an important area for study in the context of Ripeness.[851]

Chapters five and six show how important improvements in government capacity were for establishing the conditions for the Sangin Accord. The application of additions to Ripeness theory to the case study introduces a more useful theoretical explanation by linking military activity more directly to the political goals of counterinsurgency than Zartman's original theory allows. Stathis Kalyvas's argument is powerful:

> Insurgency can best be understood as a process of competitive state building rather than simply an instance of collective action or social organization. State building is the insurgent's central goal and renders organized and sustained

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"He was a big commander in the [Soviet] jihad" but was a junior commander in the Taliban with only about 20 fighters." Primary Source PS-26. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013.
When "Mullah Salaam joined the Afghan government it was not a big loss for Taliban, because Taliban can create 100 other Mullah Salaam in one day and didn't cause us much trouble" Primary Source PS-34, between 40-49 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alizai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - Province. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-34.

[849] ISAF official, background conversation 22nd May 2012.

[850] Ibid.

[851] The role of private contractors in compensating for resource shortfalls is an important extension for this line of analysis, shown eloquently in James Dunsby, "The Changing Role of Contractors in Security Transitions in Southern Afghanistan," in *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical, Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Transition, Handover and Withdrawal*, ed. Timothy Clack and Robert Johnson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

> rebellion of the kind that takes place in civil wars fundamentally distinct from phenomena such as banditry, mafias, or social movements.[852]

The capacity of governments now becomes a factor that can be incorporated into the Mutually Hurting Stalemate, since – as shown earlier – strengthening the Afghan state was a declared goal of the international campaign. The additional flexibility in additions to Ripeness theory also allows relative calculations about capacity between rival actors, each claiming the right to govern, to be included within a wider group of factors contributing to both the Way Out and the MHS.

In early 2010, the official Afghan Government presence in Sangin consisted of: a District Governor (with 4 house staff), a Mayor (no staff), a National Directorate of Security officer (and less than 10 officers), a Chief of Police (with 30 active, present policemen from a maximum establishment of around 202) and an Army commander with some 400 active, present soldiers and officers (from a maximum establishment of some 700). Ten local elders advised the District Governor, and from their number came a development and construction project manager, and a former teacher to address education. Health care was provided through the Health Ministry by the Bangladeshi Non-governmental organisation, BRAC.[853] In Sangin District, this was one clinic running sporadically in the town centre.[854] There are three methods in which this data can be factored in to MHS calculations. Firstly, the difference between public aspirations (or expectations) of government, and the reality, constitute Hurt by affecting public engagement with official institutions. This can be manifested both as an unwillingness to work for those organisations, to access the services, or to support their aims as a negotiating party. Second, international expectations about Afghan Government capacity may, if disappointed, affect willingness to support them, or increase the attractiveness of more immediate service delivery mechanisms that side-line official organisations. Thirdly, adverse calculations about the capacity of Afghan Government-administered areas, relative to that offered by Taliban (shadow)

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[852] Kalyvas, 2006, o*p. cit.*, p. 218.

[853] BRAC, "Annual Report: Afghanistan 2014," 2014, http://www.brac.net/sites/default/files/ar2014/BRAC%20Afghanistan%20AR%202014.pdf(accessed 20th December 2015).

[854] Data on the structure and number of Afghan government officials in this paragraph comes from Participant Observation from 2009-10 confirmed multiple interviews and visits during the author's time in Sangin.

governance, cause Hurt where mission success ultimately relates to an eventual handover of control to an Afghan Government perceived as legitimate in Afghanistan and by overseas observers.

This same method applies to international capacity. While UK military doctrine was clear that to reach a political accommodation "all protagonists must eventually understand one another's objectives and aspirations, and that they will have to make accommodations," the capacity to do has been questioned.[855] Anthony King assessed (based on research largely from 2008-9), that "officers tend to be more comfortable with military action than with considering the political consequences of their actions."[856] Diplomatic efforts also faced challenges of comprehension, and soon after arriving in 2006 there had been a view among some officials that Sangin should be handed over to the ANP and ANA to control because of the complex nature of the tribal system.[857] What is clear from Afghan sources is that in later years, around the Accord, the reputation of the Provincial Reconstruction Team for project delivery played a positive role in creating shared positive horizons. Four interviewees describe how "the good job of PRT in Marjah, Garmsir and other districts really encouraged the elders and Taliban in Sarwan Qala to get ready for making an accord."[858] One goes further suggesting that "the only reason that Alikozai elders in Sarwan Qala area worked to make this accord happen was to bring PRT construction projects to Sarwan Qala."[859] Elsewhere a surge in military activity tended to be followed by a surge in reconstruction effort. Having watched this occur across Helmand, Sangin's Alikozai may have first "decided to have construction and development projects without any

[855] British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 4-10.

[856] King, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 324.

[857] Rayment, 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 173-4,.

[858] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. Also PS-2: "the PRT actions on building and constructing affected to the negotiation and making the accord."
ISAF General Richard Mills echoed this point after the Sangin Accord, saying "I believe many of the Afghans in Sangin look to successful areas such as Nawa and Lashkar Gah and they want that same progress in their district. They want schools, medical clinics, and the freedom to move about without fear of the insurgency." ISAF Joint Command, 2011, o*p. cit.*, http://www.rs.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/afghan-coalition-leaders-broker-peace-deal-in-sangin.html.

[859] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[military] operations."[860] From a theoretical standpoint (but only in an MHS constructed using additions to Ripeness theory), it appears possible to consider reconstruction elements as part of a Mutually Enhancing Opportunity (in which local needs were met while also progressing the Kajaki Dam electricity project important for the ISAF campaign objectives), and as a cause of Hurt for the Taliban administration – as local communities were demanding construction projects of a scale and complexity that only ISAF could deliver. This technical shortcoming undermined local perceptions of the legitimacy of the Taliban administration relative to the ISAF-backed Kabul authorities. But there were other factors also affecting trust legitimacy calculations, notably historical legacies, money and narcotics.

Additions to Ripeness enable a third element, illustrated by primary sources, shedding light on a more complex picture about where the impetus to negotiate originates, and in what form. The case study suggests that the pressure to negotiate was generated by local communities and applied to their elders. This falls outside the boundaries of Zartman's core theory, in which military leaders are typically the agents of perception that matter most. For one government official, the discussions with elders that led to the Sangin Accord were primarily "for preventing civilian casualties during the [military] operations in Sangin, and for bringing development projects to the Sarwan Qala area for the benefit of local villagers."[861] The elders' mediation role extended in both directions since "the local elders' pressure [also] made the Taliban commanders agree to negotiate with Afghan Government."[862] For additions to Ripeness theory, this sort of pressure exerts Hurt, potentially offsetting any disparity in objective military advantage. Evidence suggests that this was related to wider efforts to use all possible means to increase the Alikozai hold on territory in Sangin, and to expel foreign elements from the area. Previously, Alikozai elements let "foreign Taliban come to Sarwan Qala and fight against the Afghan Government and foreign troops"[863] but by 2010, with local Taliban control slipping, one suggested motivation for the

[860] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.
[861] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[862] Primary Source PS-3. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[863] Ibid.

Accord is that "foreign Taliban in Sarwan Qala and Pakistani Taliban planned to attack the Alikozai Taliban in Sarwan Qala and disarm them, so they joined the Afghan Government and got the support of Afghan Government and ISAF."[864] If true, this offers the perspective that ISAF had no direct role in the Hurt calculation underpinning the decision to negotiate the Accord. Instead it appears to come from Taliban based outside Helmand and across Afghanistan's borders, is felt by locals, and is transmitted to their representatives who seek a protective agreement with their government and international forces. One source states directly that a major factor was "the pressure of the local villagers on [local Alikozai] Taliban to negotiate."[865] In this scenario, the Accord would be classified as a conflict management negotiation triggered by power perceptions between the Alikozai and other Afghan groups, rather than a genuine conflict resolution negotiation related to a Ripe Moment. Within that, the relationship between the Afghan Government (and its Western backers), and the Alikozai, was as providers of positive psychological horizons based on protection and public service provision. According to theory, this would be more akin to a Mutually Enhancing Opportunity, since the Accord also offered the Afghan Government and ISAF the chance to achieve campaign objectives – such as access to the Kajaki Dam project, flood defence improvements, and other actions designed to foster the legitimacy and capacity of the Host Nation government.

Implications for the Way Out

Chapter one explains that the Way Out has little theoretical definition beyond a shared perception that both sides are prepared to look for one with genuine intent. Events outlined in chapters two, three and four, show that there were long historical trends suggesting that both outsiders and a government based in Kabul might not be trustworthy negotiating partners. At the local level, there were also reasons why locals lacked confidence in the intentions of their government. Taliban commander [name removed] said "really we became tired of the cruelties of the local government and foreign troops at that time, and then we decided again to take weapons and stand

[864] Ibid.

[865] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

against [them]."[866] This suggests that some in Sangin "were not ideologically Taliban commanders."[867] British officials had drawn much the same conclusion, assessing in January 2011 that the "Alikozai were not natural Taliban sympathisers. Large numbers had sided with the insurgency as a reaction to criminal behaviour perpetrated or allowed by previous provincial and/or district administrations."[868] Government resources had also allegedly been misappropriated by officials, and abused for commercial gain – including narcotics production: "Sangin District has lots of land belonging to Afghan Government, but those who had power in that area used those lands for growing poppy."[869]

Opium was woven tightly into the economic fabric of the insurgency, and – given the problems outlined earlier with the irrigation and river systems required for sustainable licit crop production – remained one of the few dependable crops, regardless of political leanings.[870] Opium connected local events to globally significant trends: in 2011 the United Nations assessed that Afghanistan was the centre of global heroin manufacture[871] accounting for up to 85% of production.[872] Helmand Province was at the core of the global trade in Afghan opiates, with Sangin a significant site for poppy growth and processing.[873] It is therefore impossible to disconnect political and military events from the opium trade. As early as 2007 the threat of poppy eradication by government forces existed – and this may have been a factor in the Musa Qala and agreement, and the so-called Levée-en-Masse in the Sangin Valley that same year –

[866] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.
[867] Ibid.
[868] FOI-15, 12th January 2011.
[869] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
This allocation of land relates to the order of the district within the official classification under the constitution, outlined in chapter 2.
[870] For the relationship with the Taliban, see Gretchen Peters, "How Opium Profits the Taliban," United States Institute of Peace, 2009, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/taliban_opium_1.pdf(accessed 20th December 2015).
[871] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "The Global Afghan Opium Trade: A Threat Assessment," UNODC, 2011, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Global_Afghan_Opium_Trade_2011-web.pdf(accessed 20th December 2015). p. 5.
[872] Ibid., p. 143.
[873] Ibid., p. 142.

and altered perceptions of the government and ISAF.[874] This relationship is reflected in primary sources relating to the Sangin Accord, with four accounts suggesting when combined that motivation for the Accord was partly driven by community pressure on the elders to protect their opium interests, and sanctioned by at least one Taliban official near the top of the entire organisation.[875] Poppy was an important source of financing for the insurgency, but it also had a significant impact on the governance structures the international coalition aimed to engage with and bolster, and in turn the likelihood of the Way Out emerging. As Nick Kay, the UK regional co-ordinator for southern Afghanistan stated in 2006:

> "Significant elements of the provincial leadership and institutions are so enmeshed with criminal and insurgent interests that it is difficult to draw distinctions between legal and criminal structures – a particular challenging situation in the context of a counterinsurgency where perceptions of the state's responsiveness and legitimacy are critical to the extension of its moral and political authority"[876]

The picture was not so clear-cut when also considering the impact on local communities. Successful policies to reduce opium production were fundamentally bound up with the delivery of improvements to other areas of public service, since "illicit drug crop cultivation supported an improvement in the welfare of parts of the rural population in Afghanistan," allowing "those in the desert areas of south and southwest Afghanistan to acquire land and assets that they would not have realised if opium poppy were not illegal."[877]

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[874] On Helmand's eradication activity in 2007 see for example Ahto Lobjakas, "Afghanistan: Multipronged Drug-Eradication Effort Set for Helmand," Radio Free Europe, 30th January 2007, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1074381.html(accessed 20th December 2015).

[875] On protection of poppy crops under the Accord, see Primary Source PS-30. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
And Primary Source PS-27. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
On senior leadership approval for the deal, following community pressure, see Primary Source PS-18, between 30-39 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Tribe Undeclared tribe. Local to Sangin? Undeclared. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-18.
Also Primary Source PS-28. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[876] David Slinn and Michael Ryder, quoted in Farrell and Gordon, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 668.

[877] Alex Marshall, *Grasping the Links in the Chain: Understanding the Unintended Consequences of International Counter-Narcotics Measures for the EU* (EU Community Research Development Information Service (CORDIS): University of Glasgow, 2015).

A Way Out included visible evidence of government commitment to operate in an area. Expanding the government presence to counter the shadow government often meant acquiring local buildings and converting them into public facilities. But repercussions were a constant fear for those involved in such transactions. A case from Zabul is typical. Offered the colossal sum of $50,000 for a building the owner said "even if you offer me double that I'll not do it because the Taliban will kill my children."[878] In Sangin in 2010, after an apparently legitimate transaction validated by the local authorities, construction began on a new military outpost. Like wildfire, a rumour spread that the buildings had collapsed a hidden library, destroying 1,000 Qur'ans. A large agitated mob surrounded the District Governor's building and widespread armed repercussions were considered imminent. A quickly organised delegation of elders, mullahs and officials disproved the story, but similar incidents elsewhere had led to open conflict and loss of life.[879] This presented a severe challenge to the international community: to direct funding through the Afghan Government, or enter into direct contracts for reconstruction projects? The UK's Department for International Development channelled more than 70 percent of its funding through the Afghan Government, at least until 2009.[880] Coalition-wide, the quantities were enormous, with both positive and negative impacts on government reputation. For example, the US Army's Commander's Emergency Relief Fund (CERP), a source of financing for reconstruction and development programs to be spent discretionally by commanding officers in the field, increased from zero in 2003 to 1.2 billion dollars in 2010.[881] This approach was codified in the US Army's *Commander's Guide to Money as*

[878] Bishop, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 106.

[879] This incident occurred during the author's service in Sangin, 2009-10, and is recounted here as participant observation. In 2010 in Garmsir "rumors [sic] spread that American servicemen had desecrated a Koran and defiled local women in a nearby village. Taliban provocateurs on the scene whipped up a crowd and goaded it to violence, local officials said." Dexter Filkins, "Deadly Protest in Afghanistan Highlights Tensions," 12th January 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/13/world/asia/13afghan.html?_r=0(accessed 25th July 2015). Also Malkasian, 2013, o*p. cit.*, pp. 166-173.

[880] John Bennett, *Country Programme Evaluation: Afghanistan, Ev969* (London: Department for International Development, 2009), p. ix.

[881] Paul Fishstein and Andrew Wilder, "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan," *Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, Medford, MA*, (2012), p. 13.

a Weapons System Handbook.[882] Questions around capacity, and the source and use of funding, created perceptions that could be classed as Hurt for the official administration as it attempted to extend the public services required to generate the trust and legitimacy necessary to show that the formal government was a suitable partner for a political Way Out, or Mutually Enhancing Opportunity.

The question of trustworthiness peppers the primary source material, especially in relation to the prisoner release condition that appears to coincide (as well as the evidence allows) with the opening of formal negotiations. The legacy of the unsupported 2007 uprising in the Sangin Valley remained potent. This lack of trust was a major hurdle that any accommodation building would need to address, since for one elder "from that time most of the Alikozai elders promised never to help the Afghan Government again."[883] There are sources to suggest that all sides displayed – at times – both genuineness, and alternatively no honest intent, to negotiate for conflict resolution. At least five sources are unequivocal that the sole "aim of negotiation for the Alikozai Taliban was to release Mullah [****], and nothing more."[884] An Afghan Government official with direct access to the Accord shared this fear, initially at least, for he "was afraid a bit that it might be the Taliban's project to release their commander and then break the negotiation."[885] Another government official also expressed a clear temporary conflict management motivation for the Accord, recalling that "the Accord was a good chance for the Afghan Government to insert itself inside Sarwan Qala" since "before it was very difficult for Afghan forces to enter [that area]."[886] One source suggests a joint collaborative aim, which for Zartman would be the shared and positive psychological state associated with a Mutually Enhancing

[882] Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Commander's Guide to Money as a Weapon System (MAAWS) Handbook* (US Army, April 2009). There is no equivalent counterinsurgency manual relating to longer term development planning or spending using military budgets.

[883] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[884] Primary Source PS-6. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013. Also PS-15: "the main demands of the Taliban for doing negotiation was releasing of that man." PS-13: "on Taliban side the main aim and propose was only releasing of Mullah [****]." PS-9: "It was a tactic of Alikozai Taliban for releasing a religious and important commander of Taliban from the government [name given in the original source]." PS-7: "All the negotiations and accords were planned by the Taliban only for releasing Mullah [****]."

[885] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

[886] Primary Source PS-12. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

Opportunity. For just one man, "the aim of the Alikozai elders and the Afghan Government was to reduce the pain of violence, and the opportunity for both sides to get something better by working together."[887]

One Taliban source suggests mixed motivations, assessing that "the negotiation was a game [by] the Alikozai Taliban to release Mullah [****], though I accept that the Taliban also lost some parts of Sarwan Qala. That gave us disadvantages."[888] Two other sources offer joint motivations for the Sangin Accord, though these suggest shared negative reasons for the negotiation, indicating no genuineness on either side, and so a complete absence of Ripeness. An elder felt that "overall it was a game from both sides, the Taliban for releasing Mullah [****] and the Afghan Government for finding a safe way for entering Sarwan Qala. Both sides misused the Alikozai elders."[889] For an Afghan Government military commander, both sides had a secret plan: the Taliban negotiated to stall or cancel the impending ISAF military operation, while the government sought to take the Sangin Valley without a fight."[890] The legitimacy of the elders acting as mediators is frequently cited as a reason for the perceived credibility of the Accord, in this case suggesting that respected intermediaries had a direct impact on individual assessments of the presence (or not) of a Way Out. Two sources offer negative assessments. The first outlines well-intentioned foreign forces misled by local contacts: "British troops were trying to find a solution to end the war in Sangin District but the elders who were advising them were not good people."[891] The second cites the disparity in intelligence and capacity between local intermediaries and the personalities in the local Taliban administration, recording that "because the negotiation was not done with clean hearts, the Taliban had a secret aim. Those elders who were the mediators between Taliban commanders and the Afghan Government were very simple people and they couldn't analyze the aim of Taliban" – an outcome

[887] Primary Source PS-13. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. ibid.
[888] Primary Source PS-8. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[889] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[890] Primary Source PS-10. Self-identified role: Government - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[891] Ibid.

accentuated by the fact that "the Afghan Government [were] not negotiating with the Taliban face to face" for the majority of the time.[892]

Saunders defines "pre-negotiations" as "the parts of the negotiating process that take place before around-the-table negotiation begins."[893] Afghan conflict "includes regular contact with enemy leaders (via telephone, letter or face-to-face)," often because of kinship and other ties.[894] "Most conflicts end when one group switches sides or agrees to surrender" and Afghan conflict parties expect direct communication on these subjects.[895] "Thus, the mere fact that our local partners are in dialog [sic] with the enemy is not an indicator, in and of itself, of disloyalty to the government."[896] This is challenging for some Westernised organisations, which typically handle such communications centrally, considering the opening or cessation of dialogue as significant indicators, perhaps of relative strength or perceived legitimacy. The generation of the Sangin Accord therefore attempted to boost the Afghan Government's credibility, as the first step towards being a legitimate partner in a Way Out. For one source, this was helped considerably by long-standing ties: "we knew from the beginning that this project will happen, because the Taliban commanders that we spoke with were all from our area and we knew each other from many years ago. The Alikozai Taliban commanders respected us."[897]

Afghan Government officials went to significant lengths to validate the credibility of those they were dealing with. Both sides had a mixed record of manipulation, honesty, and switching allegiance, and individual interlocutors did at times exaggerate their political importance (the most famous of which was a greengrocer from Pakistan who convinced the intelligence services that he was the Taliban's deputy leader interested in peace talks).[898] According to one source, during

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[892] Ibid.

[893] Saunders, 1985, o*p. cit.*, pp. 252-3.

[894] Kilcullen, 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://literature-index.wikispaces.com/file/view/Kilcullen-COIN+Metrics.pdf. p. 9.

[895] Ibid.

[896] Ibid.

[897] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[898] Urban, 26th November 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/newsnight/markurban/2010/11/taliban_leaders_duping_of_mi6.html. This event could be used to ridicule one service, but "as Bill Harris a senior American official who had until

the Sangin Accord "there was one main group [of] five or six elders who were the Afghan Government's main contacts to talk with the Taliban, but besides that the Afghan Government appointed many other different elders separately to follow this case and to investigate all the reports that the main group brought from the Taliban [and confirm whether it] was true or wrong information."[899] This involved up to five different groups of elders, totalling perhaps twenty individuals.[900] All the groups were working secretly and each group didn't know that others were also working on the same project – just one week before of the accord, [Afghan Government official – name redacted] brought us together to work as one.[901] The due diligence appeared to worth it as "fortunately when these five groups brought information from the Taliban side, all the information from these five groups was the same," showing that – despite a lack of leader-related data for the May 2010 timeframe – the genuine intentions of the Alikozai Taliban were both demonstrated and recognised in the months immediately preceding the January 2011 Accord.[902]

Identifying the Ripe Moment

Accurate, regularly validated insight into the mindset of conflict parties is essential for identifying a Ripe Moment. This case study would benefit from more data, covering the conflict parties' psychological perceptions over a greater timespan. Ripeness theory is particularly focused on perceptions held by leaders, and that is an area of deficiency in the source material. Nevertheless, the absence of an intended military escalation, high casualty statistics (relative to the rest of the conflict), a recent catastrophe (the spring floods), and echoes of a previous disaster (the 2007 uprising) suggest the closest correlation with a Ripe Moment at the point that the Alikozai

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recently been working in Kandahar pithily told The Times "something this stupid generally requires teamwork" (quote from the same source).

[899] Primary Source PS-16. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed.

PS-4 recalled two or three groups of elders. PS-5 suggests three to four groups. PS-1 claimed 5 groups.

[900] PS-2 reported that "they didn't know that there were 20 elders from their area working on the same project."

[901] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[902] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

Taliban letter arrived in May 2010. This assessment would be significantly strengthened by evidence that Afghan Government sources were in direct contact with the Alikozai Taliban prior to that letter reaching the Afghan District Governor, as this would lend credence to the idea that a Way Out had already been formed, but this is not available.[903] Without that, it is not possible to rule out that the letter was a unilateral tactic. That letter might also have been the first step in attempting to form a Way Out, a test of credibility, or a secondary channel while the true [in a theoretical sense] Way Out was in fact constructed between the Sangin Alikozai and some other interlocutor. It is also possible that the weaknesses in the explanatory value of Ripeness theory shown here are partly weaknesses with this Western dataset. It remains possible that an entirely Afghan process (and therefore dialogue) for conflict resolution was underway, and that data about a much richer Afghan political process remains uncollected.[904]

The Afghan sources available here offer widely differing evidence about the point at which negotiations began, and differentiate poorly between communication, bargaining, and negotiation. The strength of the analysis is weakened considerably by the fact that none of the self-declared Taliban sources chose to comment on the timing question. Nevertheless, three Afghan sources with unclear alignment, or linked to the government, consider the negotiations to have started around spring 2010: one stated that "when our primary negotiation started there was no news of American troops coming to our district,"[905] another that "when the beginning of the negotiation started, it was not clear that British troops would be leaving"[906] and a third that "the beginning of the negotiations were months before the leaving of British."[907] These place the opening of negotiations approximately in spring 2010 or earlier. Accuracy is

[903] Perceptions were partly informed by the 2007 uprising, reporting that "the elders went back to their districts, and after a week they called me on my mobile worried that we don't leave them alone after the operation like [Provincial Governor] Wafa did." Ibid.

[904] This relates to important research on variety of routes to stabilisation and peace, some of which do not require (or are not helped by) the actions of external actors. See chapters on indigenous and autonomous stabilisation in Christian Dennys, *Military Intervention, Stabilisation and Peace: The Search for Stability* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

[905] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[906] Primary Source PS-11. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[907] Primary Source PS-10. Self-identified role: Government - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

difficult since rumours of the handover surfaced in January 2010, it was enacted in September, and the build-up of American Marines in Sangin would have been visible – to those with access to Sangin town – over the summer.[908]

Phil Weatherill suggests that the Taliban's use of a signed letter bestowed formality on the offer, but also implies that this was unilaterally offered, rather than negotiated. For Zartman, this would place it outside the Ripe Moment, but potentially in the formation of the Way Out. The offer would not itself illustrate the presence of a theoretical Way Out unless both parties considered that letter sufficient evidence that a genuine shared outcome aimed at conflict resolution was intended. This cannot be verified from the sources available here. That said, one of the key Afghan sources directly involved in the Accord shares the perception that the use of letters indicated a shift in sincerity: "I felt that the negotiated solution to end the conflict in Sarwan Qala area was possible when the elders brought a letter from the Taliban."[909] It is also possible that the May 2010 letter was not widely known about in Sangin. Official reporting lends some weight to the argument for March 2010 correlating most closely with a Ripe Moment, highlighting features of a painful stalemate. That same month, diplomats assessed that "substantial change is unlikely, or a major reduction in casualty levels, without significant investment on security in the district from both ISAF and ANSF."[910] Using the data presented in this chapter, Ripeness theory would therefore indicate that if formal negotiations opened around that time, they conform to a reasonable degree with Zartman's core theoretical requirements. Referring to Figure 10 (power and legitimacy conditions under which insurgents and regimes would consider entering into negotiations), and analysis of the same moment in May 2010 using additions to Ripeness theory suggests two possible scenarios are credible. First, a mutual boost to legitimacy through negotiation, with a constant power dynamic (8A and 2B), perhaps because of the intersection between government stabilisation offers and military coercion, Alikozai needs after the flooding, and a desire to reduce military

[908] Initial rumours: Starkey and Harding, 9th January 2010, o*p. cit.*, http://www.commondreams.org/news/2010/01/09/british-troops-set-hand-frontline-afghanistan-role-us. Handover: Pannell.
[909] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[910] FOI-11, 22nd March 2010.

pressure. The second explanation would be an increase in Afghan Government power and legitimacy at the direct expense of the Alikozai Taliban (1A and 1B).

Other local sources considered that the negotiation process began roughly 2-4 months before the Accord was announced in January 2011, correlating with public knowledge of the coalition intent to conduct joint US-UK military operations in Sangin in autumn 2010: "the secret negotiation started around three or four months before the accord happened"[911] and "started when the [Afghan] Government planned to launch an operation in Sangin District."[912] Under the core theory this does not constitute a Ripe Moment. A stalemate might exist, but the impending military operation is a clear indication of escalation and so any temporary stalemate does not meet the definition of an MHS, as the pain of escalation is tolerable for at least one conflict party. For Zartman this would also rule out genuine intentions by that party, and place any negotiations opened at this point into the category of conflict management, in which temporary advantages are sought. One of the most well placed government sources with direct knowledge of the process links both moments:

> "our first conversation started around 7 or 8 months before [i.e. May or June 2010], and our serious conversations regarding making a deal started around three months before the accord day [i.e. October 2010]. Around three months before the accord day [4th January 2011] we understood that Taliban in Sarwan Qala were ready for peace."[913]

Another central Afghan Government source shares the view that more formal negotiations began much later than the spring letter, saying that "until three or two and half months before the accord, I didn't believe that this accord would be done."[914] A local elder also felt that "when the Taliban confirmed in a letter the will to negotiate with the Afghan Government, then we felt that this negotiation is possible. I don't know the exact date but it was the last month of 2010" [i.e. December].[915] Was a

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[911] Primary Source PS-12. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-2: "The talks started few months before the accord."
[912] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[913] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.
[914] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.
[915] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

community meeting an essential indicator of the Way Out? That does not appear to have happened until December 2010, some seven months after a written offer was received. Assessments of the significance of silence, and indicators signposting transition from informal communication to formal negotiation need further testing against local practice, as "in Afghanistan, warfare is normally accompanied by direct messaging" occurring "partly because people across all factions of the insurgency and the government side are related to each other, have common district or tribal ties and know each other well, because many families have members on both sides."[916] Importantly, assuming that sources favouring a late 2010 timeframe were also aware of the May 2010 letter, this would suggest the presence of factors in the interim period that qualified the earlier intentions into more formal, genuine overtures.

Improvements to policy also offer evidence that could form part of calculations about the timing of a Ripe Moment. President Karzai made a brief appearance at the December 2010 reconciliation event in Kandahar "to express his personal support, and underscore that reintegration was a national priority" with the event serving "as a launch pad for the Governors of Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul, Helmand and Nimroz to begin reintegration work in earnest."[917] At provincial level, sources suggest that the initiative was viewed with some scepticism, including by government officials. The "Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Program was not a successful project in Helmand Province. We haven't heard that a known Taliban commander came and joined this process;"[918] it was "only a show and only spending money in a wrong way."[919] Officials suggested that "reintegration – in its formal structured sense – does not fit with current reality in the USV [Upper Sangin Valley], where communities still want to fight,

[916] Kilcullen, 2009, o*p. cit.*, http://literature-index.wikispaces.com/file/view/Kilcullen-COIN+Metrics.pdf. p. 9.

[917] FOI-13, 9th December 2010.

[918] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. Also PS-5. For a detailed analysis of the program's difficulties, notably that "many shortcomings stem from the fact that the programs were shaped by the post-Bonn political context" (in which the Taliban were excluded from political discussions), see Deedee Derksen, "The Politics of Disarmament and Rearmament in Afghanistan," United States Institute of Peace, 2015, http://www.usip.org/publications/2015/05/20/the-politics-of-disarmament-and-rearmament-in-afghanistan(accessed 3rd December 2015). quote from p. 3.

[919] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

even if it is to repel out of area fighters."[920] However, the wholesale co-option of communities remained a powerful solution, and so the Afghan Government continued with negotiations.

Co-option hinged on achieving influence with vital community leaders since "in Afghanistan, especially in rural areas, actors who combine formal office with the legitimate political authority gained through local [sometimes, but not always, tribal] structures achieve higher levels of political centrality and therefore power, than those who have merely been appointed to public offices: political power is associated less with state apparatus and more with consent."[921] As a former Science teacher, who had taught the fathers of many fighters, DG Sharif brought both personal and organisational credibility that was fundamental to creating a Ripe Moment. Sharif's legitimacy aligned strongly with one contact vital to the Sangin Accord: "Commander [name removed] was a teacher before he joined the Taliban and he had very open mind. There was not too much difference between his ideas and the Afghan Government's ideas."[922] Within key members of the Afghan Government, the perception was that "the Taliban commanders who negotiated with us were not destroying Afghanistan; they only took up weapons to secure their areas."[923]

Local perceptions did not always align with the belief held within parts of ISAF that "while large-scale tribal settlements can offer big advances, the local impact on the insurgency and communities of taking mid-level commanders directly out of the fight should not be underestimated."[924] This type of targeting played a part in evolving the character of the Taliban movement. A Sangin elder described the impact of removing many of the original, likely older, members of the organisation: "In the beginning the Taliban had very good behavior towards people, solved the problems of

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[920] FOI-19, 20th June 2011. ibid.

[921] Personal communication with anthropologist and Afghanistan specialist Donald Bray, 11th July 2013. Donald is researching Socio-Political Organization in Contemporary Southern Afghanistan: Understanding Political Dynamics amongst the Helmandi Pashtun. See Cambridge University, "Biography: Donald Bray," 2015, http://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/Staff_and_Students/donald-bray(accessed 11th May 2015).

[922] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

[923] Ibid.

[924] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 4177/11, "*Afghanistan/Helmand: Reintegration - Progress and Challenges*," 7th March 2011. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-17. See Annex A.

the villagers, and brought very good security. That was the reason why lots of villagers in north Helmand supported them. But now a different type of people joins the Taliban and they kill innocent people, disturb villagers and force them to pay taxes."[925] This change came at the same time as improvements to the Kabul administration's presence outside the capital. For one source, "one of the reasons that locals stopped supporting the Taliban [in Sangin] and turned to the local government is because the local government became much better and found legitimacy among the people."[926]

These changes to legitimacy enabled an Accord "based on trust and honesty" underpinned by improving local confidence: "when villagers and Taliban commanders saw the [reconstruction] developments, their trust become more concrete."[927] Alongside capacity, improvements in the trajectory of trust perceived by both sides were catalysed by effective discussions about side-issues. In this case, Afghan efforts to build the relationships that led to the Sangin Accord focused initially on renovating the shrine at Garm Ab, in the north of the District, believed to heal the body and wash away sin.[928] Talks turned only to security and reconciliation and eventually to a formal Accord months later, when credibility and confidence allowed.[929] This is the clearest evidence offered in the sources suggesting progress towards a Way Out. These conditions established an environment in which the power of the local elders to vouch for the government and then to mediate was strengthened, as first "the governor trusted the elders, then we trusted the commanders of the Taliban."[930] Afghan Government representatives then met "many times with different groups of the Alikozai in Sangin District" and the offer to open negotiations was made, accompanied by the request to release Mullah [****] outlined earlier, to confirm government

[925] Primary Source PS-6. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared, interviewed 2013. ibid.

[926] Ibid.

[927] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

[928] Confirmed by three sources, ibid. Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. Primary Source PS-7. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[929] Another example of such constructive dialogue was the Taliban's changing "approach to education and health [which] also demonstrated a degree of revision and pragmatism in synch – to an extent – with international priorities and those of the Afghan government" and represented "relatively neutral issues that could be built into the process, perhaps even as confidence-building measures." Semple et al., 2012, o*p. cit.*, p. 10, p. 14.

[930] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

genuineness.[931] These events shifted perceptions, resulting in the vital moment where the parties decided to meet and negotiate about the substance of the Accord, indicated "when they [the Alikozai Taliban] showed a blue signal" [note: in Pashto the same word means blue and green].[932] Under additions to Ripeness theory, the same progress could be counted as changes in the relative Hurt calculation, in legitimacy, and evidence of shared positive horizons. This correlates closely to the legitimacy conditions advanced by Druckman and Green under which a Ripe Moment exists – as set out in Figure 10 in chapter one, cell 1A – where the insurgents' legitimacy and power is decreasing relative to the regime – indicating that additions to Ripeness theory can offer useful explanatory value in this case. There are also flaws with the capacity of Zartman's theory to explain this local negotiated agreement; an assessment of these theoretical strengths and weaknesses, and some recommendations for policy makers, are set out in the final chapter.

[931] Primary Source PS-2. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[932] Ibid. Also PS-15: "the main purpose of the Taliban for that accord was releasing of a Taliban commander who was called [name confirmed as the same in the original source]. PS-12: "the demand of the Taliban for the start of negotiation with Afghan government was the release of [name confirmed as the same in original source], who is the son of a respected religious man." PS-5: "The first issue of the negotiation was the releasing of [name confirmed as the same], who was released by Governor Mangal." Also PS-8, PS-9, PS-10, PS-11, PS-13, PS-16.
Personal communication with Mike Martin, referenced elsewhere for his work on Helmand, confirmed that the word "shin" (or dialectic variants) in Pashto means both green and blue, hence the use of "blue signal" here, meaning the same as "green light" in English.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The Sangin Accord: impact and legacy

Six days after the public announcement of the Sangin Accord, the ISAF Commander US General David Petraeus visited Helmand to assess the agreement first hand. The official report of the visit records his comment, that "the peace accord represented a positive development. We should be cautious in our assessment and in moving forward, but should do everything possible to build on it."[933] Provincial Governor Mangal was "hopeful that the accord would prove durable, but sometimes in Afghanistan things [only] start well."[934] The international coalition now faced a conundrum: how to implement the agreed provisions effectively, and ensure that the Accord ultimately strengthened the Afghan Government's bond with its people, in preparation for eventual withdrawal. Counterinsurgency doctrine captures this pressure:

> "Putting the host nation government in the forefront of any political and economic successes may necessitate having to play down the role of the coalition. However, balance is required since maintaining the acceptability of the coalition to the population is also important."[935]

Provincial Governor Mangal took a close co-ordinating role after the Accord, in the months ahead persuading "successive ISAF commanders to draw back from full combat operations in the USV [Upper Sangin Valley]."[936] This was not a rejection of the importance of military power; on this he was consistently "emphatic, stating that military pressure on the leaders of the insurgency was critical to the success of the reintegration programme – which was to be financed largely by the Japanese Government."[937] Rather, the Governor was prepared to trade off the immediate military advantages (and progress on the Kajaki road and other construction projects), "believing that a negotiated communal settlement represents the best chance of

[933] FOI-15, 12th January 2011. See also Heidi Vogt, "Petraeus Says Taliban Influence on Decline," 10th January 2011, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/jan/10/petraeus-says-taliban-weaker-afghan-south/(accessed 6th January 2016).
[934] FOI-15, 12th January 2011.
[935] British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 7-5.
[936] FOI-19, 20th June 2011.
[937] FOI-13, 9th December 2010.

sustained success" for the longer-term.[938] One important reason for the delay was to allow the elders and leaders to undertake necessary communication with their communities, and other actors further afield. Importantly, this involved Sangin's representatives travelling to Pakistan to inform the Taliban's senior leadership, who "didn't have any information about the negotiation" until it was made public on 4th January 2011.[939] Since this delegation was still underway 19 days later, according to official records, it demonstrates the importance of political control over military actions to provide the necessary patience for information and allegiances to cascade from the direct signatories to an agreement to others now bound by it. Records reported on 23rd January that "two key Taliban commanders were currently in Pakistan, and had told the Quetta Shura of their intent to cooperate with [the Afghan Government]."[940] It is unclear from the sources who decided the Accord would be made public. The opportunity had enormous publicity value, but also brought great risk: according to one of the most credible primary sources, "Mullah Omar ordered the Quetta Shura to kill all those elders who were involved in the Accord, and also to kill the Taliban who were involved in the agreement."[941]

Physical intimidation, including murder, was a particular tactic of the Taliban, and they let it be known that there was a list of people marked for assassination. 2006 saw 177 victims who had been deliberately singled out for the challenge their existence posed, including aid workers, doctors, teachers and journalists.[942] One of Sangin's few medical professionals, Dr. Esamodin, had also been assassinated in 2010 for openly running a government-backed medical clinic.[943] According to a primary source, on 4th January "the Afghan Government publicly announced all the elders who were involved in the negotiation. Some of the elders didn't want their names made

[938] FOI-19, 20th June 2011.

[939] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013.

[940] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 1286/11, "*Sangin Peace Accord*," 23rd January 2011. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-16. See Annex A.

[941] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013. Also PS-8.

[942] Bishop, 2009, o*p. cit.*, pp. 130-1.

[943] Participant Observation for the author's time in Sangin, 2009-2010. There were related rumours that Esamodin (who identified himself as a dentist) had misdiagnosed a young patient who died, and his death was partly a repercussion for malpractice.

public as government supporters; they became unhappy and left the meeting."[944] Accounts vary on the number of elders associated with the Sangin Accord who were targeted, but between two and four seem to have been killed quickly – one the day before the public announcement,[945] others within days, and at most, one or two weeks later.[946] One source adds further tribal detail, suggesting "the elders who were killed were Taliban from the Ishaqzai tribe," long-standing rivals of the Alikozai.[947] If this is true, other explanations than the obvious are plausible, including that the Alikozai sought to prevent the expansion of the Accord's provisions to other groupings. Either way, especially given recent memories of the 2007 uprising, it is unsurprising that there seems to have been some rapid re-assessments of personal appetites to be in the area: for one source, most of those elders who were involved in the negotiation were soon not living in Sarwan Qala[948] while at the same time the Afghan Government "struggled to persuade civil servants to deploy to Sangin, citing staff concerns about security and safety."[949] This failure to deliver personal security severely hampered efforts to bolster Afghan capacity and the delivery of improved public services: one of the key clauses of the Accord.

Delivering on the terms of the Accord

Implementing the Accord required effective delivery in fields including reconstruction, governance, political reconciliation and security. Early interactions were cagey, with all sides appearing to seek further evidence of the others' sincerity. The official assessment sums this up: "developing local infrastructure and providing for basic development needs will be an important confidence-building measure, but will need to be set in the context of security gains made under the accord."[950] At the heart

[944] Primary Source PS-12. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-16.

[945] FOI-15, 12th January 2011.

[946] Afghan sources vary: PS-2: "four of the Alikozai elders who were involved in the Sarwan Qala accord were killed by the Taliban." PS-12: "two or three of those elders were killed." PS-29 reports the "murder and beheading of two elders from the Alikozai tribe who were key figures of this deal with foreign forces." PS-30 describes two deaths: the "Taliban killed them, cutting their throats and beheading them."

[947] Primary Source PS-30. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[948] Primary Source PS-12. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.

[949] FOI-19, 20th June 2011.

[950] FOI-15, 12th January 2011.

of this tense atmosphere was the need for unchallenged access to key sites, to undertake the promised reconstruction. While the international military forces could have gone where they wanted, and defeated any level of likely resistance, this would have undermined the shared intent behind the agreement, and so they paused: "a critical test of the Accord will ensue as we await evidence of secure access to assess the priority needs identified by the Shura and to monitor project implementation."[951] The situation was severely complicated by the variety of identities in play, and the challenges for security personnel in distinguishing between local people – some of whom may not have heard of the Accord – and spoiling elements from further afield. Officials reported that "Quetta, working in cahoots with interested narco-barons and numerous other spoilers, makes no secret of its intent to destroy the peace process."[952]

At the time of the Sangin Accord, the state apparatus for handling wholesale shifts in allegiance of sections of the population (as opposed to individuals or small bands of fighters) was not in place. In December, Provincial Reconstruction Team reporting acknowledged this, noting that "Helmand did not have formal reintegration structures on the scale required for a community."[953] Nevertheless, Mangal pushed ahead. Officials felt that:

> "High-profile political processes would have greater impact than individual cases on public perceptions of security and prospects for sustained peace. While lack of national guidance can cause uncertainty, progress is being made by developing local solutions."[954]

On 27th February Governor Mangal "convened the Helmand Peace Council for the second time" but it was not until "the next day [that] reintegration support teams from five Districts came to Lashkar Gah to meet the newly appointed [Afghan] Provincial Reintegration Support Team."[955] Back in Sangin, early March saw a major advancement, with 15 Ishaqzai elders coming forward, "of whom six would liaise with

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[951] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 4206/11, "*Afghanistan/Helmand: Sangin Peace Agreement*," 8th March 2011. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-18. See Annex A.

[952] FOI-19, 20th June 2011. It is also reported that "what resistance there was appears to have been mounted by out-of-area fighters" in FOI-16, 23rd January 2011.

[953] FOI-14, 14th December 2010.

[954] FOI-17, 7th March 2011.

[955] Ibid.

[District Governor] Sharif on a day-to-day basis – from a community hitherto extremely reluctant to engage."[956] This was the first indication that the agreement might be expanded to include other groupings alongside the Alikozai; essential if the Accord was not to be inflammatory.

Efforts to formalise governance were intimately linked to maturing security mechanisms, but there was a long way to go from the early kernels of the Accord. A shura on 3rd March 2011 appears to be a central event. First, it convened a shura representing Upper Sangin Valley Alikozai tribes, "marking an important stage in consolidating the January Sangin peace accord."[957] However, the shura only covered three of Sangin's five administrative zones; Mangal's commitment to form similar groups from communities in other zones was vital, as was his determination that these should eventually merge to form an interim administrative body.[958] The security challenge was also significant; officials noted that managing "expectations in a populace still smarting from failure to support their anti-Quetta uprising in 2007 will prove difficult."[959] Effective counterinsurgency also required that, as far as possible, Afghan forces – or local community initiatives – should not be replaced by international forces, which would eventually leave. Governor Mangal was clear to Sangin's communities that "long-term security is an Afghan responsibility that starts at local level," describing at the 3rd March 2011 shura a trajectory that would see community defence initiatives stand up while ANSF capacity was increased over time.[960] Scepticism over community security supported by outsiders ran deep, based on the legacy of history, including into Helmand's political classes: MPs "thought communities in Musa Qaleh, Sangin and Now Zad had tried it, but it had been

[956] FOI-18, 8th March 2011.
[957] Ibid.
[958] Ibid.
[959] FOI-19, 20th June 2011.
[960] FOI-18, 8th March 2011. On the realities of partnered ANSF development, see Oliver Lewis and Andrew Britton, "'Gripping and Touching' the Afghan National Security Forces," in *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical, Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Transition, Handover and Withdrawal*, ed. Timothy Clack and Robert Johnson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

sabotaged by the internationals."[961] This same mistrust played a central role in affecting perceptions of the Accord's duration.

Assessing the durability of the Accord

Whether the Sangin Accord lasted for any meaningful length of time affects the usefulness of the case study for future theoretical comparative studies greatly. Accounts of its duration vary considerably, from two to over 12 months. The Accord appears to have evolved over time through three ill-defined phases: the first of around two months, during which some early signatories left the process or were killed; then a renewal after six months, partly triggered by Taliban re-negotiation with the Alikozai; and a third phase involving attempts (by both the government and the Alikozai themselves) to extend the Accord to other groups and areas. Coverage from Afghan primary source material and public Western analysis ends in April 2012, preventing a credible assessment of the Accord's end date – or confirmation of its survival.

Six sources place the end of the Accord just one or two months after the agreement, with one considering it little more than a "symbolic accord, because after few months it was broken."[962] The two-month estimate coincides closely with Governor Mangal's community shura in Sangin on 3rd March 2011, suggesting that this visit may have been to place fresh impetus behind a flagging agreement. Events had also affected perceptions held by military commanders, including the US Marine Corps officer in command of international forces in Sangin. He expressed his reservations in March 2011, saying that "while some are still optimistic that the agreement is in place, others, including me, are much more suspect about whether there actually is an agreement or if they are capable of upholding an agreement."[963] Two sources place the blame on all parties, stating: "both sides were not honest in their promises, I think half of those commanders rejoined with the Taliban. The development projects were going on for the few first months after the accord; then later those projects also

[961] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 35298/07, "*Afghanistan: Meeting with Helmand MPs, 23 August*," 26th August 2007. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-8. See Annex A.
[962] Primary Source PS-14. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-10: it "was not continued even for two or three months."
[963] Associated Press, "Tribal Peace Deal in Afghanistan on Shaky Ground," 2nd March 2011, http://www.dawn.com/news/610079/tribal-peace-deal-in-afghanistan-on-shaky-ground(accessed 5th January 2016).

stopped."[964] Three sources felt that Taliban actions destroyed the Accord, lending weight to the accusation that they struck the agreement purely to secure the release of Mullah [****].[965] Attacks on key community elders, including beheadings, played a role in this reassessment with one Taliban source confirming that renewed efforts to establish relations with the Alikozai were needed after the murders.[966] For one source, the departure of some Taliban from the process triggered improved engagement with the Afghan Government: "after two months when the Taliban commanders who were involved in the accord returned back to Taliban, most of the villagers improved their support to Afghan Government."[967] For another, the Taliban withdrew specifically because the Afghan Government did not stand by their reconstruction promises.[968]

Wallensteen's research – if valid in this case study – suggests that progress on military co-operation would have been definitive for the duration of the Accord, concluding from a review of 144 civil war agreements that "less costly concessions by government of military integration and autonomy increase the duration of peace agreements, while political power-sharing provisions have a negative though insignificant impact on duration."[969] By June 2011, implementation issues dominated perceptions. The PRT reported that while the accord still held, "USV commanders expressed concerns with what they described as slow progress following the 1 January peace accord. Their main gripes are what they see as a lack of project delivery, ISAF's unwillingness to work more closely with [them], detainee issues, and battle damage."[970] These points seem to have some merit, with the same report assessing that "governance in Sangin has progressed dramatically in the last half year, but delivery on stabilisation and development has lagged behind and cooperation between

[964] Primary Source PS-12. Self-identified role: Government - Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-11: "These promises were given from both sides but unfortunately after around one and half months, all the promises were broken."
[965] PS-13: "The Taliban broke the accord and broke their promises." PS-28: "after two months the deal was cancelled and again the Taliban stood against the Afghan government and Americans." Also PS-10.
[966] Primary Source PS-29. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[967] Primary Source PS-10. Self-identified role: Government - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[968] Primary Source PS-14. Self-identified role: Other. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Post 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013.
[969] Derouen et al., 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 367.
[970] FOI-19, 20th June 2011. 1st January appears to be the date the Accord was privately agreed, with 4th January being the public announcement.

ISAF and USV commanders is in its infancy."[971] Diplomatic reporting highlights one instance where a mixture of factors had generated an impasse that could – with further corroboration – constitute an MHS under additions to Ripeness theory. Analysis from June 2011 concluded that "all sides find themselves in somewhat of a stalemate: ISAF doubting the value of the agreement given the recent rise in kinetic activity; the local commanders given the apparent lack of dividend for turning away from Quetta."[972]

Judged over the longer-term, the Accord generated visible progress in material areas that both improved the lives of local people, and met campaign objectives for the international presence. One source cites improved recruitment into the security forces, recalling that "after the accord lots of the villagers joined the ANA and Police."[973] Others prioritise the improved transport and public services, while just one describes the outcome of the Accord in terms that reflect Zartman's Mutually Enhancing Opportunity, required to deliver stable longer-term horizons:

> "We have an asphalt road from Sangin to Kajaki; Taliban Commanders who were involved in the agreement are not receiving airstrikes anymore; and government troops do not come under attack from the Taliban in Sarwan Qala. I think this agreement and accord is for the benefits of all three groups who tried their best to make this agreement happen."[974]

Only one source corroborates that the Accord lasted for at least 12 months. An Afghan source with direct knowledge of the agreement recounted that "after one year of our accord with Taliban, I mean in January 2012, ISAF came to Governor Mangal and said that due to this accord or deal having been very successful we want to celebrate its first anniversary."[975] The same source reports that Mangal declined the offer. Given the repercussions for those involved when it was announced, this seems wise. A few months later, Sangin held its first elections since the Accord. Elections were a key objective for the international community, recognised as a significant sign of progress

[971] Ibid.

[972] Ibid.

[973] Primary Source PS-10. Self-identified role: Government - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Indirect, interviewed 2013. Also PS-1.

[974] Primary Source PS-5. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. Also PS-4.

[975] Primary Source PS-1. Self-identified role: Government Civilian. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Direct, from pre-4th Jan 2011, interviewed 2013.

and also a validation that security conditions had reached appropriate levels. The data below illustrates just how fragile the concept of democratic elections and public engagement with them really was in rural Afghanistan at that time:

> "The Sangin election shows the value of local political settlements. The agreement reached in January 2011 paved the way by enabling security to improve across much of the district. There appears to be a cumulative effect too, the numbers of voters steadily increasing from the first in 2008 (Nad Ali – 105) to the seventh in 2012 (Sangin – 1,995)."[976]

Alongside the electoral success, the Accord stirred up the complex local political situation. While Mangal saw "the Sangin Accord as a model for wider outreach efforts across the province,"[977] it required deft handling from Afghan officials. The turbulence was felt within the Alikozai tribe itself (recalling the dispute between generations for tribal leadership),[978] and with rivals in the region – notably the Alizai from neighbouring Musa Qala.[979] Alikozai sources were clear that any extension of the Accord should not alter the balance of power in Sangin, saying of the Alizai: "they should only live in Sangin District as villagers and residents not as [a] decision-making tribe."[980] Despite the exceptional complexity in managing these political nuances, officials recorded Governor "Mangal's belief that it [the Sangin Accord] could become the gold standard for communal reconciliation in Helmand and elsewhere."[981]

Implications for scholarship

The importance of history for theory iteration

The central role played by historical influences in the Sangin Accord case study demonstrates that Governor Mangal's stated intent to replicate that negotiated agreement more widely required Afghan officials to interpret expertly the relationship

[976] FOI-21, 3rd April 2012.
[977] FOI-19, 20th June 2011.
[978] PS-12: "Alikozai elders in Sangin who were not informed of the making of that accord became opposed to the Alikozai elders from Sarwan Qala who did the negotiation without their permission of Alikozai elders in Sangin. Still there are tensions between these two groups."
[979] Primary Source PS-4. Self-identified role: Elder. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Pre 4th Jan 2011 - Direct, interviewed 2013. The "Alizai tribe has lots of population in north of Helmand Province and they are trying to take control of Sangin District then they can own all the north of Helmand Province."
[980] Ibid.
[981] FOI-19, 20th June 2011.

between history and the contemporary political and social context in which they operated.[982] In the Sangin case, an understanding of ancient antecedents gave important context to the more recent grievances, perceptions of legitimacy, tolerance to Hurt, and persuasiveness of negotiating opportunities in play immediately prior to the Sangin Accord.

A longer-term reading of the history sets out the extremely long-standing lineage of many influences that, if excluded, would undermine the credibility of a historical narrative about the Sangin case study. Since, as shown in chapters six and seven, these factors affect the presence of a Way Out, MHS and Ripe Moment to varying degrees, a recent history alone would be of restricted value as a basis for iterations to Ripeness theory. This places renewed importance upon historical scholarship to provide a foundation for later theoretical work focused on conflict zones. Chapter two outlined the impact of history passed through the generations on perceptions of influential social and political boundaries, and upon modern attempts to (re-)define areas of state responsibility or administration in Helmand Province. Geographical features, notably the Helmand River, influenced patterns of movement and affected engagement with urban centres including political capitals. This early history of the Afghans showed that the resistance to centralising authority experienced in recent times had long-standing roots, especially in rural or fringe areas – exemplified by the fractious interaction between the state and the region of Zamindawar in north Helmand over taxation, and also the Alikozai tribe's experience of military conscription in the 19th Century. In the early decades of the Afghan state, few visible signs of local benefit from interactions with the formal administration – and the variable application of coercive or collaborative community control policies – heightened desire for autonomy, or resistance. These trends, beginning in the country's early history remained influential upon the perceptions held by communities involved in the Sangin Accord.

[982] The contemporary Afghan Government would need to overcome the failures of the Soviet era government, hamstrung by the fact that "whenever it did attempt to expand its influence in the countryside, imported naïve and often arrogant party workers from the cities, whose presence was often temporary, and who only alienated the local inhabitants from the central regime." Alex Marshall, "Managing Withdrawal: Afghanistan as the Forgotten Example in Attempting Conflict Resolution and State Reconstruction," *Small Wars and insurgencies* vol. 18, no. 1 (2007), p. 71.

Chapters three and four show how important the preservation and later analysis of records relating to major reforms, and infrastructure projects, can be for understanding future conflict drivers. Attempts to operate in Helmand would be heavily undermined without a clear understanding the impact of the mid-20th Century Helmand Valley Authority irrigation projects upon water and land politics of the region (also crossing into neighbouring countries, like Iran). In turn, the implementation of such projects – and the consequences for local populations – is remembered by later generations, and features in contemporary legitimacy assessments that in turn affect support for central authority backed by foreign funds and personnel. The use of opium production as a valuable domestic source of revenue, diluting the power of foreign financial subsidy, and funding rival visions of government continued themes seen in the Soviet era. This demonstrates the importance of economic research, including illicit trade as well as the capacity for legal domestic productivity, for those explaining motivations to negotiate.

The case study shows that historical research also plays an essential role in capturing the trajectory of perceptions over time, including identities, the strength of religious belief, and trust in local groups and governance mechanisms relative to those espoused by Afghans from further afield, and foreigners. This helps counter the weaknesses inherent in any analysis relying on snapshots in time, for both policy and theory generation. Similarly, a longer-term review of the history of Helmand warns against single label categorisations – such as Taliban – especially in fringe areas. Where state law and order provisions are unlikely to sufficiently protect those holding absolute positions, the value of social and political hedging incentivises the adoption of multiple identities and allegiances as a survival mechanism, as shown by multiple generations of people involved in the Sangin Accord.

The events immediately prior to the Sangin Accord set out in chapters five and six show that approaches to generate negotiated agreement continue in the context of these longer-term historical drivers, and also influenced by distinctly recent approaches to governance, state-building, and the use of military force. Governor Mangal's appointment of Mohammad Sharif as District Governor in Sangin illustrates the link between this nuanced understanding of historical context and political legitimacy. However, it also suggests that general characteristics of quality (such as

literacy) are significant, as important foundations for the added ability to discern which factors seen in the local context matter. Many of the indicators that suggested that District Governor was increasingly competent could be considered widely applicable: he was literate; consistent; financially transparent and even-handed; characteristics that would be respected across the world. Importantly, Sharif's approach combined a variety of political mechanisms. These – as earlier references to Kilcullen suggest – maximised the efficacy of political action by prioritising the way in which it would be assessed and viewed by locals, whose views were in turn partially informed by recent experience and the historical record. The Afghan Government's use of shuras and relationships with key elders, alongside elections and other state functions, shows how vital this portfolio of new and long-standing approaches was for finding the common ground between Western-backed organisations and locally-understood groups that led to the Sangin Accord. Official reporting from 2006 also identified and grappled with these implications. Engagement with the Afghan shuras ran in some ways "counter to policy agreed by the government and international partners" because:

> The model of governance enshrined in the constitution does not give a role to local shuras, which are unelected and accountable only to themselves. But shuras of tribal elders have a long history in Afghanistan and probably have more legitimacy in the eyes of ordinary Afghans than the formal sub-national bodies.[983]

The focus on understanding local perceptions of legitimacy as a central underpinning of success in Afghanistan gives further credence to the importance of understanding the historical record in conflict areas (as well as any outside observer, or direct participant can). The pragmatic option was "to use these shuras to help deliver government priorities for security and development, but without ceding too much autonomy."[984] Such hedging may have been prudent, as part of early steps towards building the opportunity to bring key individuals or communities into formal government structures through reintegration or reconciliation. It may also have had counter-productive side effects. The complex web of identities employed by the Alikozai and many others suggests that such mixed approaches may have created norms of interaction that did not encourage open declarations of support from local people. Especially after the announcement of the withdrawal of international forces,

[983] FOI-2, 25th September 2006.
[984] Ibid.

political hedging strategies may have undermined the likelihood of a public ceasefire or peace agreement – or any other polarised, absolute position – since "the very way in which the power struggle is handled in preparation for independence [or in this case, transition of security control] is important in establishing the future rules through which power will be used and passed among the parties thereafter."[985]

While security and factors such as economics, infrastructure delivery, and land and water access were influential, the link between historical factors and the perceived legitimacy required to deliver the political objectives central to campaign success pervades the Sangin case study. The engagement between local people and armed groups over their desired outcomes from violent action was also significant.[986] The most powerful evidence to support the value of nuanced historical knowledge remains that political strategy on all sides prioritised the co-option of influential people into power structures aligned to nation-wide government or Taliban organisations, playing heavily on the relationship between dominant historical narratives and contemporary perceptions of legitimacy to achieve local political support.[987] The Sangin Accord case study therefore highlights the importance of factors that fall outside the core definitions of Ripeness theory, with significant implications for the use of Zartman's theory to inform actions in ongoing conflicts, and areas in which the theory could be developed.

Challenges for using Ripeness theory in operational practice

Theorists continue to seek explanations for negotiated settlements, and conflicts taking place within state borders (rather than between nations) remain important cases because there are so few successful political resolutions: "between 1940 and 1990, 55 percent of interstate wars were resolved at the bargaining table, whereas only 20 percent of civil wars reached similar solutions."[988] This reduction is

[985] Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit.*, p. 13.

[986] See for example Sophie Haspeslagh, *Workshop Report: Local Civil Society Engagement of Non-State Armed Groups* (London, 1st November 2013).

[987] Derksen, 2015, o*p. cit.*, http://www.usip.org/publications/2015/05/20/the-politics-of-disarmament-and-rearmament-in-afghanistan. pp. 29-34 illustrates the direct link between the historical record and the relative success of government policy in the Sangin area, such as disarmament and political reintegration.

[988] Barbara F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* vol. 51, no. 3 (1997), p. 335.

explained by the greater significance of loss of legitimacy for parties in internal conflict:

> "Often a military stalemate and a rough kind of equality emerge. In an interstate war, this might provide the basis for some sort of negotiated settlement. However, in an internal war, the government abandons its legitimacy if it openly negotiates with the rebels. The commitment of the rebels makes them equally unwilling the struggle, which has become their life."[989]

Nilsson demonstrates an important point, that a partial peace – excluding certain conflict parties – is possible without affecting the signatories' commitment to peace, though the permanence of that peace will depend on effective law and order, or security measures addressing the actions of excluded groups.[990] This is clearly less applicable when the single major opponent is excluded, as can happen if labelled as terrorists, for example. Actors focussed on practical political work in the field have also considered the validity of Zartman's work. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission was set up in 2005. Its report on *Enhancing mediation and its support activities* in 2009 observed that some have taken Zartman's theory to mean that "the international community should wait for a "hurting stalemate" to develop before offering mediation; but this turned out to be costly for all concerned, since opportunities for early resolution were lost and a stalemate sometimes led, instead, to intractability."[991] The same Commission has also reported on *Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict*.[992] Both documents focus on the impact that the conduct of signatories to agreements, mediators and other supporting actors have upon the sustainability of an agreement after conflict has ended. These studies raise two challenges for Ripeness theory, suggesting developments to the theory would be beneficial. These points are also echoed in the Sangin Accord case study. First, that policymakers focus considerably on the outcome of negotiations, requiring theory to

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[989] Roy Licklider, "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993," *The American Political Science Review* vol. 89, no. 3 (1995), p. 683.

[990] Desirée Nilsson, "Partial Peace: Rebel Groups inside and Outside of Civil War Settlements," *Journal of Peace Research* vol. 45, no. 4 (2008), p. 479.

[991] United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Enhancing Mediation and Its Support Activities," 8th April 2009, http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SGReport_EnhancingMediation_S2009189%28english%29.pdf(accessed 17th October 2012). Pages 5-6 refer.

[992] United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Armed Conflict," *www.un.org* (2009). http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/s2009304.pdf (accessed 11th June 2012).

address this to be truly useful in real-time scenarios. Secondly, that the historical legacy of failing to implement the terms of a negotiated agreement affects future attitudes towards negotiation, upon which a future Way Out – and therefore, a future Ripe Moment – would depend.

Areas for developing Ripeness theory

As shown in chapter seven, Ripeness theory's original formulation aligns with thinking rooted in rational cost-benefit analysis, by placing the use of coercive force at the very heart of strategies to control populations' behaviour.[993] This stems from a Cold War political context, where the risk of nuclear confrontation meant (Superpower) parties acting to bring about negotiation in other conflicts were unlikely to also be direct overt participants in those conflicts.[994] Zartman expresses this approach clearly, suggesting that "once one side has provided arms or political support, the only way to bring a conflict to management, let alone resolution, may well be to provide enough countervailing support to bring about stalemate and negotiation."[995] This allowed Ripeness theory to combine rational approaches to cost-benefit assessments with clearly defined conflict parties. Chapter seven shows both foundations to be insufficient in the Sangin Accord case highlighting seven areas for theory development, following below.

Points one to three of the suggested areas for further research relate to the definition of conflict parties, and difficulties with the Way Out and the Mutually Hurting Stalemate in the core theory. The first requirement is improved definition of conflict parties in local and fringe areas, where political and identity hedging strategies complicate clear categorisation. The second area for consideration is a subset of the first: Ripeness theory does not adequately cover scenarios in which one or more actors offers political and military support to another conflict party with the lead responsibility for negotiation (in this case, the Afghan Government), while also being

[993] For his clearest summary see Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, pp. 8-9. Also Richard Shultz, "Breaking the Will of the Enemy During the Vietnam War: The Operationalization of the Cost-Benefit Model of Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Journal of Peace Research* vol. 15, no. 2 (1978).
[994] An excellent review of the processes and mindsets is found in Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Longman, 1999).
[995] Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit.*, p. 16.

active participants in the conflict themselves (in this case, the UK and US).[996] This absence has a serious impact on the analyst's ability to apply Ripeness theory to explain the case study. The third area relates to the relationship between military conduct constituting an MHS, and the likelihood of a Way Out. Ripeness theory implies there is no interaction between the desire and intent for a political Way Out – and the actions that construct it – with perceptions of the factors that establish an MHS. This is problematic, for example, the conduct of one party's military forces may affect the perceptions held by their own side's negotiators about the prospects for successful negotiation. Conflict parties might also act to effect an MHS but in doing so, use conflict strategies that reduce an opponents' willingness to consider them genuine partners in a shared Way Out. Breaking an agreement for tactical military gain would be an example. The impact of individual or collective trauma (likely in violent conflict) upon either rational action or perception is also not considered in Zartman's writings, and affects the rationality underpinning all the theoretical points above.

Points four to six relate to constructing or recognising a Ripe Moment in conflicts where reconstruction activity and political legitimacy are important policy objectives for one or more conflict parties. The fourth raises problems for explaining conflict involving parties that cannot afford military defeat for reputational reasons, and have either the capacity for significant escalation and/or a rationale to invite Hurt. Thus, if a superpower (or an international organisation, such as NATO in this case) is intent on preserving the deterrent value of its military at all costs, a "crisis of tactics will produce escalation"[997] and national liberation movements have "nothing to lose by fighting and nothing to do but fight" then both parties face catastrophic consequences from accepting (and being seen to accept) that force has brought them to the negotiating table – in such cases a Ripe Moment is near-impossible.[998] Additions to Ripeness theory do offer some explanatory prospects, allowing Hurt triggered by

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[996] Third-party intervention is discussed in Marieke Kleiboer, "Ripeness of Conflict: A Fruitful Notion?," *Journal of Peace Research*, (1994). However, it refers to mediation rather than direct participation.

[997] Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. 17.

[998] Zartman, 1989, o*p. cit.*, p. 14. Zartman calls these blockers to the psychology of negotiation Resistant Reactions (see Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, p. 12.). A superb exploration of these concepts can be found in Eric Hoffer, "The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements," (evelynbrooks.com: HarperCollins e-books, 1951). http://evelynbrooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/The_True_Believer_-_Eric_Hoffer.pdf (accessed 2nd January 2016). Sections on Factors promoting self-sacrifice, Fanatics (XIII) and The Fanatics (XVI) are most pertinent.

other mechanisms to compensate for the military element. The case study shows this using reconstruction requirements and legitimacy shortfalls. Further developments are suggested, however.

The fifth area applies when political legitimacy and state-building infrastructure objectives are at the heart of definitions of success. New analytical approaches are possible:

a) the relative balance between the conflict parties relating to these factors can construct an MHS, even when resistant mindsets prevent acceptance of a military-driven MHS (this perception can be heightened if, as the Sangin Accord illustrates, pressure from local people is acknowledged);

b) parties might move directly to the shared positive horizons described in a Mutually Enhancing Opportunity:

> "If an MEO could be theoretically developed and practically exploited as the other entry door to negotiation; most people engaged in the study and practice of negotiation would be pleased to see the MHS demoted to only one of two necessary (even if not sufficient) conditions for the initiation of negotiations."[999]

This would meet one of the key criticisms of the theory that it relies exclusively on negative psychology: in the Sangin case, the Taliban sought the same improvements as the Afghan Government and international forces, following pressure from locals, and so the chance to play a role in the improvements could form an MEO. However, Taliban reliance on the government and ISAF to deliver technically complex reconstruction projects would contribute strongly to a non-military MHS. This raises the possibility that a surge in non-military improvements could be constructed as either a coercive or a positive motivation to negotiate, under additions to Ripeness theory.

The sixth area relates to the relationship between military action and legitimacy. The requirements of local communities for public services and other provisions, beyond simply armed resistance to the foreign invader, obliges groups with resistant mindsets to evolve and accept some of the responsibilities of a state – if they wish to retain legitimacy. This is illustrated by the expansion of Sangin's Taliban

[999] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 245.

shadow governance beyond purely fighting, to include a Civil Commission to respond to community wishes in agriculture, education, and representation.[1000] The local characteristics of the case study add significant degrees of complexity to the explanatory process, posing challenges for modelling and representing conflicts and applying Zartman's theory to them – particularly for practitioners seeking to foster political legitimacy. An effective analysis requires: an understanding of the trajectory over time of perceptions held by a range of conflict parties (each typically multifaceted); events at the local level pertaining to the components of a Ripe Moment to be placed within a wider geographical and historical context; locally-held legitimacy assessments to evolve in the context of relationships between groups and individuals, both horizontally and vertically.[1001] Similarly, the need for international forces to foster a government perceived as legitimate and capable to hold power after their departure promotes the importance of a theoretical framework that incorporates political legitimacy and relates it to military action.

Additions to Ripeness theory offer far greater potential for this than the core theory, though further work is needed to draw definitive theoretical conclusions. The case study, and scholarship triggered by Zartman's theory, show that explanations allowing iterative progress towards Ripeness are the most persuasive and more useful.[1002] The Sangin Accord case study also exposes a seventh weakness in the explanatory value of Ripeness theory; that previous perceived failures to stick to an agreement fundamentally undermine rationality about future negotiating opportunities, as occurred for the Alikozai in Sangin in 2007. The suggested evolutions above are driven by the essential importance of the effective implementation of the terms of the agreement and of those that protect the negotiated agreement for policy

[1000] There are some parallels here with Pruitt's analysis considering the psychology of "a polity rather than looking only at leader level." Pruitt, 2005, o*p. cit.*, p. 22.

[1001] These might include the interaction between the vertical legitimacy of the Afghan government and supporting international elements; and the horizontal legitimacy between groups at the same level, within both conflict and stabilisation parties and the population. This draws upon Ohlson, 2008, o*p. cit.*

[1002] This draws upon the type of "dynamical" approach that theorists use to extend Zartman's theory. Dynamical "is defined as a set of interconnected elements (such as different beliefs, feelings and behaviours) that change and evolve together over time" in an evolving system. This adds the perspective that intractability could be caused by a self-reinforcing system, as positive feedback loops mean that "each element of the conflict activates and reinforces other elements" such that "the system resists changes." Coleman et al., 2008, o*p. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

makers. Alongside these theoretical challenges, the Sangin Accord does raise some considerations for future policy and practice.

Implications for policy and practice

The Sangin Accord case study highlights six considerations for practitioners and policy makers considering approaches to negotiated agreement. These relate to: (1) how individuals and organisations understand the role negotiation plays in conflict strategy; (2) the importance of policy on communication, and the capacity to do so effectively; (3) placing the local level of analysis within in a wider context; (4) defining actions to promote legitimacy; (5) actively promoting transitions of policy, mindset, and action; (6) acknowledging that implementation matters as much for political stability as the agreement itself.

Understanding the role negotiation plays in conflict strategy

It is essential to understand how negotiations are perceived by individuals and organisations in live conflict situations who are engaged in actions focused on political outcomes. The conceptualisation underpinning international activity (or sub-elements of it) is only addressed once in the primary source material relating to the Sangin Accord. In March 2010, UK officials recorded that:

> "We have long said that reintegration and reconciliation can only be achieved from a position of strength – a position we do not yet have in Sangin. And, as ever, the key challenge ahead will lie in finding sufficient trained and enduring Afghan National Security Forces to sustain any improvements in security [author's note – and territorial gains] over the longer term."[1003]

If this was official policy (and it is not possible to confirm this from one source) it has profound implications for the approach taken to the Alikozai Taliban's letter appearing to offer political progress received on 29th March of that same year. It would suggest that the opportunity was not viewed as something that could be progressed, and – if the requirement for a position of strength was paramount – that Ripeness theory was not considered influential upon policymakers. If the theory had been influential, this apparent stalemate would have indicated to policy actors that a

[1003] FOI-11, 22nd March 2010.

possible negotiating opportunity existed. As suggested in chapter seven, March 2010 was the point at which the conflict was nearest to a Ripe Moment (especially when considered by additions to Ripeness theory), then according to Zartman there would be consequences for future political efforts, since "failure to seize the moment often hastens its passing, as parties lose faith in the possibility of a negotiated way out or regain hope in the possibility of unilateral escalation."[1004] If there was knowledge of the impending start of the latest phase of the US military surge in March 2010, then this quote would be consistent with the case study.

The Sangin Accord history suggests that definitions of success should move beyond the domination or destruction of an opponent if a campaign is to be assessed by longer-term political stability, where social cohesion is best assured by reconciliation through negotiated settlement. Some approaches may be counter-productive to longer-term social objectives if they generate new grievances (or exacerbate old ones) that the post-transition government cannot manage effectively. Economic issues (including those associated with stabilisation projects) may affect the co-option of groups as "greed-based conflicts seek the continuation of war as an avenue to self-enrichment."[1005] Individuals and organisations must determine whether their policy is based on: negotiating opportunities arising only from the success or failure of other conflict strategies, or; that negotiation as a practice (including its precursors, confidence-building communication or dialogue) has an evolutionary impact on conflict. If the former, debate focuses on the triggers that signify the time is right for dialogue. In the latter case – though it is essential to control formal bargaining – tight restrictions on communication (even exchanges of views) may inhibit progress.

The importance of policy on communication and the capacity to do so

Practitioners should consider the distinction between a formal negotiating process, and communication that fosters social ties and sets the conditions for the will to improve the reach of any agreement. This needs to be reflected in policy, to ensure that officials are given permission to communicate widely enough to generate the

[1004] Zartman, 2001, o*p. cit.*, p. 13.
[1005] Cynthia Arnson, "The Political Economy of War," in *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed*, ed. Cynthia J Arnson and I William Zartman, (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), p. 11.

political and historical understanding required to underpin any negotiation, even if the formal negotiation itself is controlled more tightly. For theory, the Sangin Accord suggests that the very act of dialogue, or offer of it, established a political equilibrium (which could under additions to Ripeness count as part of an MHS), since the opposition's power advantage depended on isolating Sangin's community through intimidation.

US, and UK counterinsurgency doctrine sets high expectations for the Political Advisor here, requiring them to shape, meaning "influence and inform the perceptions, allegiances, attitudes, actions, and behaviours of all principal participants in the Area of Operation, and in the regional, international and domestic audiences as well."[1006] The greater the mandate to communicate outside the formal bargaining process, the greater the chance of developing a strong political strategy resting on a shared vision that meets local and international objectives, containing credible elements that can be sustained after international forces depart. This depth of understanding is vital to enable strategies that alter perception and motivation, as "it is through an approach which seeks to unify essentially voluntary efforts that political primacy is achieved."[1007] These principles guided stabilisation staff working in Sangin on the implementation phase of the Sangin Accord in 2011; they were urged to "help build momentum by facilitating government engagement, build deeper understanding of community demands, and develop plans for possible stabilisation activities. Avoid over-promising, and counter-productive consequences."[1008]

Placing the local level of analysis within in a wider context

Analysis techniques that place artificial boundaries around political and social questions risk skewing the conclusions and misdirecting the resulting policy

[1006] The definition of "shape" is from British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 4-10. Allocation of the shaping task to the Political Advisor is found in US Army, 2006, o*p. cit.*, paragraph A-16. It also states that "this position is not suitable for intelligence professionals. They can help, but their task is to understand the environment. The political advisor's job is to help shape the environment."
US doctrine refers to this role as the Political Advisor, and suggests it is likely to be a military individual. The UK used Political Officer (POLO), a civilian post, perhaps to avoid confusion with the UK's Policy Advisors (POLADs) deployed into military headquarters staffs to work for military commanders, largely on defence policy issues.

[1007] British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 3-5.

[1008] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, eGram 1287/11 (attached document), "*Sangin - Options for Civil Support*," 23rd January 2011. Published under UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0494-14, 2nd October 2014, and allocated source reference FOI-16A. See Annex A.

recommendations and activities. So, despite the distinct focus on the local level of analysis in this thesis, the case study and the historical review show that the Sangin Accord must be considered – and can only be understood properly – within longer historical and wider geographic contexts. Afghanistan's neighbours have a close interest in events in the south of the country, notably Iran and Pakistan. Anatol Lieven summarises Pakistan's strategic considerations in a representative fashion: to prevent Indian encirclement, "Pakistan must have a friendly government ruling in Kabul or, failing that, at least friendly forces controlling the Pathan areas of Afghanistan adjacent to the Pakistani border."[1009] This places the fate of southern Afghanistan firmly within the content of India-Pakistan relations, and most recently also the focus of the so-called Islamic State grouping based across Syria and Iraq.[1010]

Afghanistan expert Antonio Giustozzi considers Iranian interests in Helmand, and Sangin, to be an importance influence on the political events leading up to the Sangin Accord. As shown in chapter two, the function of the Kajaki Dam north of Sangin had a direct impact on the flow of the Helmand River, which in turn affects the viability of the farmland across the border in Iran's turbulent Sistan Province. According to Giustozzi's own assessment of his Taliban source material, this interest led to political engagement in Helmand including with the former Provincial Governor Sher Mohammed Akhundzada. After "actively pursuing at least some Taliban networks in Helmand until 2005" he negotiated a new deal with Taliban elements in 2006: Taliban sources indicated an Iranian role in forging the deal, at least indirectly, with "both Zakir and Sher Mohammed's men were being offered financial and other incentives to keep the pressure on Kajaki dam high, to prevent its completion."[1011] From a purely military perspective, an international military surge into Helmand could be perceived as a little too close to the Iranian border, and this appears to have been

[1009] Anatol Lieven, *Pakistan: A Hard Country* (PublicAffairs, 2011), p. 408.

[1010] See for example Dawood Azami, "Why Taliban Special Forces Are Fighting Islamic State," 18th December 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-35123748(accessed 3rd January 2016).

[1011] Pressure on Kajaki Dam confirmed in Primary Source PS-35, between 30-39 years old. Ethnicity and tribe: Pashtun, Alizai tribe. Local to Sangin? Local - Province. Self-identified role: Taliban - Military. Awareness of Sangin Accord: Undeclared. This source is anonymised, and given the label PS-35. Antonio Giustozzi quotations from personal email communication with the author, Giustozzi also notes that "it is worth noting that this [the Zakir-Sher Mohammad link] is an odd relationship in a sense; Sher Mohammed maintains close relations with President Karzai and would happily be re-appointed back as Helmand governor. Zakir is among the Taliban leader one of those most bitterly opposed to any negotiations.

one facet of the Iranian mindset. During the 2006 operation to take the new electricity turbine to Kajaki, locals apparently demanded "the right to search the convoy to verify that it did not contain a new 'secret weapon' designed to menace Iran."[1012] In personal communication with the author, Giustozzi prioritised the human security rationale above the potential military encirclement, concluding that "it's the water flow to Iran's dry eastern regions that has the Iranians seriously concerned."[1013] In this, Tehran's concerns echoes those from previous centuries virtually unchanged. Attempts to bring Sangin's conflict parties to a negotiated agreement played out within this wider regional context; one where many local and international actors sought to bring individuals perceived locally as legitimate into their own organisations, and conflict resolution strategies.

Defining actions to promote legitimacy

The reconstruction actions of the international presence in Afghanistan, dominated by English speakers, were influenced by Western liberal norms which focused on organising elections, the creation of a market economy, and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. A major critique of this agenda is that it is "characterised by programmes, practices and actions implemented from the top-down in areas that are not necessarily defined as priorities by local populations or that respond to the root causes of armed conflicts."[1014] Perceptions of legitimacy were also affected by the relative success or failure of interactions between international diplomatic norms and local norms about when "to negotiate an issue, as opposed to adjudicate[ing], arbitrat[ing], or ignor[ing] it,"as well as the "proper pace or appropriate timing for certain bargaining behaviors [sic], [what is] considered a reciprocal obligation, what constitutes a fair and just outcome, [and how] the prospect of future renegotiation [should] be handled."[1015] Individuals and organisations should consider closely how an understanding of local history and social norms affect the

[1012] Bishop, 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 288.

[1013] Personal email communication between the author and Antonio Giustozzi, 15th May 2014.

[1014] Fernando Cavalcante, "The Influence of the Liberal Peace Framework on the United Nations Approach to Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau," RCCS Annual Review, 2014, https://rccsar.revues.org/564(accessed 2nd January 2016). Paragraph 3.

[1015] Michael Fowler quoted in Severine Autesserre, "Constructing Peace: Collective Understandings of Peace, Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding," 2011, http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/critique_add/art_sa.pdf(accessed 14th May 2014). p. 4.

anticipated negotiating process, since the Sangin Accord shows that this correlates closely with the legitimacy required to underpin a Way Out, and strengthens policies focused on the co-option of individuals and communities into formal government structures.

Afghanistan held Presidential elections in 2004 and 2009, Parliamentary (and some Provincial Council) elections in 2005 and 2010, and elections for District Councils throughout this period, when security and local political conditions allowed. In some populous, more secure areas there was therefore an election of some sort in most years since 2004.[1016] In Sangin, the "first ever District Community Council election was held on the 28 March [2011] with a respectable 62 percent turnout of the 3,206 registered voters. Although this appears modest compared to Sangin's estimated population of 60,000, the number of potential voters was restricted to elders from each mosque in the district."[1017] The Ishaqzai tribe were relatively under represented after the assassination of their leading representative on the council on 4th January.[1018] Nevertheless, officials in 2011 hailed the election as "a major milestone of progress. There was a higher number of voters than in any previous local election in Helmand" and it included the election of one woman onto the council (by male-only voting), Bibi Hazara, a well-known former mujahedeen fighter.[1019] This, and the wider case study, reinforces that legitimacy was at the heart of community decisions about political allegiance, and individual legitimacy directly affected engagement with organisations such as the offices of the Afghan Government, or the Taliban shadow government. Elections and political appointments, typically considered central to political progress, struggled to deliver sufficient visible changes to quality of life in Afghanistan, especially at the local level, suggesting that they alone did not trigger sufficient actions to boost legitimacy in the eyes of the population.[1020] Improvements to legitimacy were supported over time by transitions in policy, mindset, and evidence of trust and

[1016] Election data taken from the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan and other sources, presented and analysed at National Democratic Institute, "Afghanistan Election Data," National Democratic Institute, 2015, http://afghanistanelectiondata.org/front(accessed 4th September 2012).
[1017] FOI-21, 3rd April 2012.
[1018] Ibid.
[1019] Ibid.
[1020] The importance of legitimacy is supported by Chin: highly resourced effort is irrelevant unless the "Afghan central government is able to implement reform and establish a meaningful presence on the ground that affects the day-to-day lives of the people in a positive way." Chin, 2007, o*p. cit.*, p. 221.

implementing capacity in both the Afghan Government and international presence, relative to the Taliban shadow government.

Actively promote transitions of policy, mindset, and action

Practitioners seeking negotiated agreement and applying Ripeness should consider dynamic transitions as normal, and actively track and promote evolutions to policy, mindset and action that match the theory's progression from coercion towards positive shared horizons – as set out earlier. That said coercive force applied carefully should remain a vital tool in the political arsenal to promote trust and legitimacy, particularly when protecting the precursors to an agreement (and those involved), or the success of the implementation that follows. Ben Connable's extensive research proves one such use for applied force in the context of ending an insurgency: eliminating sanctuaries that give active support remains central, when seeking a solution within defined geographical boundaries.[1021] Transitions in military approach therefore underpin negotiating progress; say from Kill or Capture, to coercion and deterrence, to provision of security guarantees for opponents susceptible to co-option, or to partnered capacity building, power-sharing or integration. These mirror the evolution in mindset Ripeness theory anticipates, from zero-sum coercion to Mutually Enticing Opportunity, and require military organisations – and those that comment on their achievements – to consider a shared outcome as a success. Transitions in policy may also be important, in some cases linked to shifts in mindset. Attitudes to political reconciliation are informative here. In 2008, Fergusson wrote that "the ultimate legacy will be a government in Afghanistan in x years' time, with Taliban representation. The Americans, with their emotional ties to the abuse of 9/11, are absolutely, vehemently opposed to that. But then they said the same thing in Iraq."[1022] This policy changed as time passed, catalysed by the death of Osama bin Laden.

The case study sheds light on an area for further research: the superpower mindset within Ripeness theory, especially when opposing other resistant mindsets, such as fundamentalism. Acceptance of the impact of Hurt is so problematic that this may be a case requiring an explanation under additions to Ripeness theory. Steele

[1021] Libicki and Connable, 2010, o*p. cit.*, pp. 34-35. See also Chin, 2010, o*p. cit.*, p. 241.
[1022] Fergusson, 2008, o*p. cit.*, p. 288.

draws interesting parallels between the end of the recent US-led campaign and Russian efforts in the 20th Century: "As with the Americans and NATO, the main motivation for the Soviet withdrawal was war-weariness, but it was dressed up in public, just as it is being dressed up in the West today."[1023] British generals' unwavering view that the Taliban, at least at the tactical level, were losing, were also prevalent within the American military elite: in summer 2011 both General Petraeus and General John Allen registered official disagreements after "CIA analysts had assessed the state of the war, district by district, and reached the conclusion that is was stalemated" – while President Obama also considered (publicly at least) that the withdrawal was beginning from a position of strength.[1024]

Shifts in mindset and policy may also be conscious and deliberate, as well as unconscious, or the result of external factors. Determining negotiating points is an essential focus for this, as the ideal approach is to ensure negotiators have the capacity and backing to take actions *that the other side(s) perceives to be concessions* – it is not essential that you do. This matters, because for Zartman "if parties that perceive themselves to be of equal power and the negotiators share a cooperative motivational orientation, the more effectively they are likely to function," compared to competitive approaches.[1025] "By giving a sense of equality to the weaker" they will be "less impelled to seek compensating advantages in other, more disruptive ways."[1026] These types of strategies require careful explanation and handling, as there is a risk that audiences recognise negotiated outcomes differently. The domestic narrative is especially important, and complex.[1027] Despite this focus on evolution within negotiating scenarios, consistency, informed by institutional memory, is also essential. What you (and your organisation) promised and what is delivered are linked directly to the perceptions of legitimacy required simply to secure access to truly credible representatives within, or representing, other conflict parties. As US Marine Corps

[1023] Jonathan Steele, "A Tale of Two Retreats: Afghan Transition in Historical Perspective," *Central Asian Survey* 32, no. 3 (2013), p. 306.
[1024] Ibid., p. 311.
[1025] Zartman, 2002, o*p. cit.*, p. 18.
[1026] Ibid., p. 289.
[1027] See for example Mark Beautement, "We're Winning Sir, We Just Don't Believe It Yet: Public Perception and Modern Military Operations," in *Comparative Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations in Conflict Zones (RUSI Occasional Paper)*, ed. Michael J. Williams and Kate Clouston, (2006).

General Larry Nicholson said so appositely, “you can surge troops and equipment, but you can’t surge trust. That has to be earned.”[1028]

Implementation matters as much for political stability as the agreement itself

While Ripeness theory concentrates on the conditions present at the opening of negotiations, getting the politics around negotiated agreements right includes at least four stages: (1) outreach focused on pre-negotiations and credibility building to prepare for negotiation; (2) striking an agreement, usually formally; (3) communicating the pledges, and implementing the provisions of the deal; (4) managing the consequences, and evolving it when required. If outreach evolves into a negotiation, and then implementation, theorists have some lessons for the structure and scope of an agreement. Retaining a record of promises either perceived or made by individuals, and organisations, is an excellent way of tracking legitimacy risks during all four stages mentioned above. Different cultures accord varying respect to positions of authority, or the conduct of the individual – regardless of their office. This focus on legitimacy gained from effective implementation also applies after agreements have been made, especially over military provisions. Hoddie and Hartzell showed that “peace proved durable in seven of the eight cases in which post-civil war states with agreements requiring military measures fully implemented this aspect.”[1029] Establishing sunset clauses, or expiry dates, to specific proposals or whole agreements can also apply pressure. “The Dayton peace talks ended well because [US negotiator Richard] Holbrooke gave the Bosnian Muslims an ultimatum: If you don’t sign the agreement in one hour, we close the talks down for good.”[1030] They also offer re-negotiation opportunities that head off violent responses to changing power relationships. “Some of the most stable civil war settlements were preceded by a rapid succession of

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[1028] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "In Afghanistan’s Garmser District, Praise for a US Official’s Tireless Work," Washington Post, 14th August 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/in-afghanistans-garmser-district-praise-for-a-us-officials-tireless-work/2011/07/29/gIQA2Cc0DJ_story.html(accessed 2nd September 2011).
The General commended Dr. Carter Malkasian, the Provincial Reconstruction Team’s District Political Officer for Garmser in Helmand.

[1029] Hoddie and Hartzell, 2003, o*p. cit.*, p. 313.

[1030] Stephen Sestanovich, "What Would Richard Holbrooke Do?," 9th December 2013, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2013/12/what-would-richard-holbrooke-do-100879_Page2.html(accessed 15th February 2014).

agreements. For example, there were seven agreements in El Salvador and 14 in Guatemala within a very short period."[1031]

The control and oversight of negotiation – especially during transition from an international presence to a supported government – remains a critical area for study and training, as doctrine is clear:

> "Where the host nation government is functioning it is essential that intervening headquarters work effectively with the agencies of the host nation in order to develop and implement politically acceptable and culturally appropriate settlement. The host nation should be encouraged to take 'ownership' of such settlements as part of the process of winning the consent of the people. The planning of transitions should reflect this."[1032]

This implies a counter-argument, that where the host government is not working, settlements may be best avoided, unless there is a temporary conflict management imperative – or unless the settlement improves governance, perhaps through the wholesale co-option of respected and capable opponents. Practitioners should not underestimate the amount of time required to see visible change after the communication or negotiation processes begin. It has been shown for example that mediation may take typically 8-12 months to moderate conflict significantly, and may increase conflict in the short term.[1033] While the Sangin Accord cannot be compared directly, as mediation was not in play, it is interesting that this correlates closely with ten months between the March 2010 letter and the announcement of the Accord in January 2011.[1034]

Final thoughts

This thesis began by asking whether the Sangin Accord case study suggested Ripeness theory and its additions had explanatory value for that, or other local negotiated agreements. Zartman's theory was applied to the local level of analysis for

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[1031] Derouen et al., 2009, o*p. cit.*, p. 371.

[1032] British Army, 2009, o*p. cit.*, paragraph 7-5..

[1033] Schrodt et al., 2003, o*p. cit.*, http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/papers.dir/Schrodt.etal.ISA03.pdf.

[1034] The Times reported in August 2010 that "officials have spent more than a year in delicate negotiation with tribal groups in and around the town," which would mean that the communication began at least 15 months before the Sangin Accord was made public. Tom Coghlan, "Tribal Uprising against Taleban Could Take Hundreds of Insurgents out of the Conflict," 13th August 2010, (accessed 20th August 2010). See Annex D.

the first time, seeking to explain the Accord while also setting out the first detailed public historical review of the case study. This final chapter has considered the implications for developing theory, and also for policy and practice in other "fringe areas" of low population containing lower military force levels – typically removed from centralised authority – in which military resource levels, doctrine, campaign planning or other factors result in no permanent, definitive military dominance, and no imminent prospect of one without a change in either the overall number of military forces available, or to another factor that currently restricts reinforcement.

This thesis has shown that additions to Ripeness theory offer a far more effective explanatory model for the Sangin case than Zartman's core theory, but that the data required for comprehensive judgements about Ripeness far exceed those available for this thesis. Particularly important is data spanning a significant timeline, to allow the trajectory of perceptions to be assessed. Data covering actors outside the local area is essential (for example, in this case, elders who fled Sangin after the 2007 uprising), since many key players and conflict drivers are affected by the actions or perceptions of those away from the area of interest itself. Access to senior leadership on all sides is also important, if challenging. In Sangin, a range of non-military factors fall outside the scope of Zartman's core Ripeness theory, but their presence – or absence – is important for the policy objectives of the campaign. These same factors are also seen to apply coercive motivation in the historical case study, such as the capacity of officials, the budget and skills to deliver services and advanced infrastructure, and trust. Most powerfully, they demonstrate shortfalls in governance capacity or delivery, thereby altering the relative legitimacy calculus between the Afghan Government and the Taliban shadow government. This same legitimacy is fundamentally linked to the success criteria for international actors seeking to withdraw leaving a lasting, effective formal government in place. Druckman and Green's work on the relative power and legitimacy conditions under which insurgents and regimes would consider entering into negotiations (see chapter one) proved to be effective as explanatory tool. Some non-military factors (or their absence) – despite being coercive motivators for opponents and constituting part of an aggregated Mutual Hurting Stalemate – also have positive impacts on the population, such as improvements to flood defences or public service delivery. Some form the basis of confidence-building communication and dialogue allowing the groundwork for formal

negotiation to be laid (subject to policy approval), where a basic level of security existed for key officials, facilities, reconstruction projects, and government institutions. In Sangin, the most powerful of these were the seed distribution and the renovation of the revered site at Garm Ab, which established political links and dialogue that turned only to security and reconciliation months later, when confidence and mutual perceptions of legitimacy allowed.

Populations who do not feel secure (as those in fringe areas may not), or have reason to doubt the credibility of their interlocutors, may pursue multiple strategies, for entirely rational reasons. In such circumstances, confidence-building measures must be specific and verifiable without requiring a public change of allegiance, as this draws reprisals before a political shift is likely. At a particular point in any negotiation, especially during transition, this capacity to corroborate the legitimacy of interlocutors, and of their offers, may not be available, which risks manipulation. The allocation of responsibility for politics according to District administrative boundaries risks diluting capacity to resolve multi-faceted social grievances – many of which span a wider area, or operate to older social conceptions of community boundaries. This "hedging of one's bets, in identity, location, profession is a powerful warning to anyone operating with policies or data collection and categorisation mechanisms that do not allow this plurality."[1035] This adds another level of complexity for real-world scenarios, and increases dependence on local expertise. Nevertheless, bold practitioners should forge ahead with early communication, as if Ripeness theory is correct, acting to bring about a Way Out can transform motivations: a sense of Ripeness (that arrives later) may turn initial communication or negotiations for side effects (such as in the Garm Ab case) into negotiations to resolve conflict.[1036]

The effectiveness and wisdom of using reconstruction spending to influence political outcomes remains hotly disputed.[1037] The Sangin case study shows that public

[1035] Mark Beautement, "Review: Fragments of the Afghan Frontier," e-International Relations, 16th May 2012, http://www.e-ir.info/2012/05/16/review-fragments-of-the-afghan-frontier/(accessed 16th May 2012).

[1036] Zartman, 2000, o*p. cit.*, p. 227.

[1037] A key study here is Gordon, 2011, o*p. cit.* Gordon finds that aid spending in itself will not translate into winning hearts and minds. Rather, it must first be pushed through local governance mechanisms to produce legitimacy. See also Seth G. Jones, "Testimony before the Commission on Wartime Contracting: Stabilization from the Bottom Up," RAND, 2010,

service delivery – especially when implemented through local governance mechanisms staffed by individuals considered legitimate by local people – can help establish humanitarian or reconstruction rationales for a foreign military presence. This provides evidence that central government cares about local needs, and can generate the confidence-building dialogue and improvements to legitimacy required to achieve political progress.[1038] It also offers a collaborative counter to those exhibiting partisan or destructive behaviours (including narcotics producers), challenging the models of governance offered by competing factions. Despite the significant focus upon non-military factors in this analysis, it is essential to recall that an effective military strategy underpins all political progress. Military forces based in the area of interest must be able to show credible force protection for themselves and the government they support, with minimum disruption to everyday life for local people. The Sangin case also shows that a security guarantee is also one of the key desires motivating wholesale changes in community-wide political alignment. Surge capacity, or effective plans to mobilise local security provisions, may be required to consolidate the extra responsibilities gained through successful negotiation – this has significant impacts for policy, planning and resourcing. Targeted strikes, from specialist units usually based elsewhere, can be extremely valuable. If co-ordinated and focused properly, they appear part of the same political campaign as local actions, sending direct coercive messages without disrupting local life and boosting the legitimacy of the local official seen to control them.

The success or failure of these approaches is critically linked to the history of the area, the relationships between the conflict actors, and local perceptions of them. The past gives context to grievance, explaining who may lose and gain – and how they may resist – if military intervention crystallises power relations at a particular point for local groups (and therefore also determining land holdings, economic advantage or

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http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2010/RAND_CT340.pdf(accessed 7th June 2013). Or Justin Gorkowski, "A Penny for Your Thoughts, a Nickel for Your Heart: Buying Popular Support for Counterinsurgency," Center for Complex Operations, 2010, http://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/case-studies/6_tn_penny_for_thoughts_teacher_edition.pdf(accessed 14th July 2011). For a study assessing whether development aid affects conflict Ripeness, see Podszun, 2011, o*p. cit.*

[1038] For more on questions surrounding the appropriateness of replicating a Weberian state-building model onto societies such as Afghanistan, and the importance of recognizing more traditional sources of legitimacy and a hybridity of political order, see Lucy Morgan Edwards, "State-Building in Afghanistan: A Case Showing the Limits?," *International Review of the Red Cross* vol. 92, no. 880 (2010).

access to public services). Officials in 2011 noted the same challenge Ahmad Shah Masood faced decades before: that "if members of the tribes perceive favouritism in the distribution of government services or security operations, they will work to undermine the position of the favoured tribe."[1039] An understanding of the trajectory therefore matters most for ensuring a negotiated agreement is constructive for wider strategy, and analysis based on snapshots should be avoided. It is a peculiar threat to large organisations, that people can consider all actions as deliberate, and based on perfect institutional memory. "You've been coming here for 200 years," said Sangin elders in 2010, of the British – "how can you not remember who everyone is?"[1040]

Extensive analysis by the RAND Corporation, *Victory Has A Thousand Fathers – Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, supports the premise advanced here that the significance of local conflict drivers, including the relationships between history and legitimacy, means that those engaged in policy and practice should not seek universal solutions to resolve conflict scenarios. RAND concluded that in the 30 most recently resolved counterinsurgencies there were 20 distinct approaches involved in successful outcomes.[1041] This level of data, and requirement for historical understanding, raises great challenges for Ripeness theory as an explanatory tool – particularly for comparative studies, where the nature of the conflict parties and the underlying drivers may be extremely difficult to prove and categorise to academic standards. Nevertheless, the Sangin Accord case offers a body of historical data for future work, and raises areas of interest for Ripeness theorists. It highlights the importance of history (both received and remembered), and traumatic experiences, on memory, perception and rationality; vital factors for Ripeness theory. Further data on the following areas would be valuable: defining conflict parties, and the formation of a Ripe Moment, in multipolar conflicts; political and identity hedging strategies as part of defining conflict parties and constructing a Way Out; the interaction between conduct creating an MHS, and its impact also on the Way Out; and the importance of implementing promises before and after the agreement, to align military and other

[1039] FOI-20, Undated (estimated from September 2011).
[1040] Heard repeatedly by the author during participant observation In Sangin between 2009-10.
[1041] Christopher Paul, Colin Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers - Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency* (RAND, 2010).

activities with post-agreement objectives based around political stability and legitimacy.

One of the most pertinent areas for future scenarios considers interactions between the psychology of superpowers and others with resistant or fanatical mindsets, and reduced prospects for perceiving Ripeness. Here, the case of renowned American diplomat Richard Holbrooke is poignant. In 2015, his wife (who wrote up all of his private notes over many decades), said "Richard, the greatest optimist I ever knew, did not think a military solution to a decades-old conflict was possible. He was convinced that eventually President Obama would have to turn to him to negotiate a regional end to the Afghan war. Tragically, his heart gave out before that could happen. Reconciliation, the policy now in play, was his goal."[1042]

The final conclusion both for theory and practice reiterates older wisdom. It is extremely complex to take negotiation from its beginning, through a genuine agreement (where Ripeness theory ends) and into post-agreement implementation – usually including the transition of security responsibility and withdrawal of foreign forces – that underpins lasting political stability built on legitimacy. Post-agreement stability relies on functioning relationships between local political and military officials. As the foreign presence steps back, will the local political representative be able to lead reconciliation, harnessing a range of military and civil resources both within their area, and from higher authorities?[1043] The co-opting of communities wholesale may require a proven security guarantee, independent from international forces. The alignment of interests is undoubtedly helped by clear aspirations for territorial control and a degree of semi-autonomy. This thesis has made much of tribal labels, and I would counsel against any single-identity categorisation. Yet, in the Sangin case, the ancient historical ties to definable territory dominated by one group (the Alikozai here – though that need not be tribally-determined in future) offers a strong overlap between Western and local conceptualisations of power and interest, focused on

[1042] Kati Marton, "Richard Holbrooke's Diary of His Diplomacy," 28th April 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/28/opinion/richard-holbrookes-diary-of-his-diplomacy.html?smid=fb-share&_r=3(accessed 1st January 2016).

[1043] On challenges for post-transition understanding, see Anthony King, "Political Analysis and Understanding in Afghanistan: Beyond Transition," in *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical, Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Transition, Handover and Withdrawal*, ed. Timothy Clack and Robert Johnson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

physical geography. There are “many paths up the mountain,” and so it is not wise to assert universal theories specifying how or when negotiations should be used.[1044] However, the Sangin Accord highlights six points to consider in future.

(1) Generating and sustaining the option for agreement (and then seeing local benefits) requires significant time – often longer than military and development strategies.

(2) Communication that aligns understanding and interests is essential for negotiated agreement; this exploratory work need not wait for a military advantage.

(3) Local conflict drivers, relationships and implementation are critical for successful strategy, especially if local solutions do not cascade from top-level engagement.

(4) Negotiation should be about conflict resolution; but unequal or temporary agreements to manage conflict remain policy options – though these approaches will undermine future attempts at genuine reconciliation.

(5) Partisan approaches to conflict and relationship-building may inhibit wider stability, where a patchwork of polarising agreements cannot be aggregated.

(6) It is vital to understand the local historical trajectory, in a wider context, as historical factors affect legitimacy directly – and therefore the creation and longer-term survival of a political agreement.

These are intensely detailed and complex issues, and understanding them socially, politically and linguistically requires an enormous amount of effort. It is therefore beholden upon policy-makers to consider very carefully before undertaking a negotiation, especially at the local level. Even if an opportunity exists to strike a deal, not taking it remains a legitimate choice. If reconciliation through negotiation is sought, however, political work focused on long-term stability should support arbitration and stabilization by creating agreements that can be aggregated together. Developing relationships with narrow sections of a society may breed segregation and inflammatory advantage between communities that are supposed to reconcile with

[1044] Nathan Springer, "Many Paths up the Mountain: Population-Centric Coin in Afghanistan," *Small Wars Journal*, (2010).

themselves, threatening stability[1045] before and after international political, development, and military actors transition control and depart.[1046]

[1045] Giustozzi concludes that without this wider approach "there is little evidence that local deal-making may favour the emergence of wider peace agreements," in Antonio Giustozzi, "Local and Tactical Political Accommodation: Afghanistan," in *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical, Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Transition, Handover and Withdrawal*, ed. Timothy Clack and Robert Johnson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 375.

[1046] This final paragraph was first printed in Beautement, 2014, o*p. cit.*, p. 353. Slight corrections have been made in this later version, resulting in minor variations from citation in the published volume.

REFERENCE ANNEXES

ANNEX A: Details of the new primary sources

PRIMARY SOURCE DATABASE Descriptors for each category							
Primary Source Code	Gender	Age Range	Ethnicity	Tribe	Local Person?	Self-identified Position	Principal relationship to Sangin Accord
PS-1 to 35	Male Female	18-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+ Undeclared	Pashtun Hazara Tajik Uzbek Undeclared Other	Alikozai Noorzai Alizai Sadozai Barakzai Ishaqzai Undeclared	Local – Sangin District Local – Province Not Local – Afghan Not Local – Not Afghan Undeclared	Government – Military Government – Civilian Taliban – Military Taliban – Civilian Elder Mullah Mirab Other, or Undeclared	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Direct Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect Post 4th Jan 2011 – Direct Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect Undeclared
Primary Source Database							
PS-1	Male	30-39	Pashtun	Noorzai	Not Local	Government – Civilian	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Direct
PS-2	Male	50-59	Pashtun	Alizai	Local – Province	Government – Civilian	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Direct
PS-3	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Alikozai	Local – District	Elder	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-4	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Alikozai	Local – District	Elder	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Direct
PS-5	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Alikozai	Local – District	Elder	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Direct
PS-6	Male	50-59	Pashtun	Ishaqzai	Local – District	Elder	Undeclared
PS-7	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Ishaqzai	Undeclared	Taliban – Military	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Direct
PS-8	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Ishaqzai	Undeclared	Taliban – Military	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-9	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Ishaqzai	Local – District	Taliban – Military	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-10	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Alikozai	Undeclared	Government – Military	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-11	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Alikozai	Local – District	Elder	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-12	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Alikozai	Undeclared	Government – Civilian	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-13	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Alikozai	Local – District	Elder	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-14	Male	30-39	Pashtun	Undeclared	Not Local	Other	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect

PS-15	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Ishaqzai	Local – District	Elder	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-16	Male	Undeclared	Not Known	Undeclared	Undeclared	Other	Undeclared
PS-17	Male	Undeclared	Not Known	Undeclared	Undeclared	Other	Undeclared
PS-18	Male	30-39	Pashtun	Undeclared	Undeclared	Taliban – Military	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-19	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-20	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-21	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-22	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-23	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-24	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-25	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-26	Male	30-39	Pashtun	Alizai	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-27	Male	40-49	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – District	Elder	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-28	Male	40-49	Pashtun	Barakzai	Local – District	Taliban – Military	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-29	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Ishaqzai	Local – District	Taliban – Military	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-30	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – District	Taliban – Military	Pre 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-31	Male	30-39	Pashtun	Sayed	Local – District	Taliban – Military	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-32	Male	30-39	Pashtun	Popalzai	Not Local	Taliban – Military	Post 4th Jan 2011 – Indirect
PS-33	Male	Undeclared	Pashtun	Undeclared	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-34	Male	40-49	Pashtun	Alizai	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared
PS-35	Male	30-39	Pashtun	Alizai	Local – Province	Taliban – Military	Undeclared

Figure A-1: Details of primary sources showing self-identified attributes deemed to be low risk.

Annex B: Documents released under Freedom of Information

This table sets out the details of the diplomatic telegrams and reporting released by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, under Freedom of Information request reference 0494-14 dated 8th May 2014.

FOI Reference	Date	Title
FOI-1	18th September 2006	Afghanistan: the Sangin Shura.
FOI-2	25th September 2006	Afghanistan: Helmand shuras - how far should we go?
FOI-3	16th October 2006	Afghanistan: Sangin Update.
FOI-4	2nd November 2006	Afghanistan: Sangin Shura.
FOI-4A	2nd November 2006	Musa Qaleh and Sangin Agreements.
FOI-5	6th November 2006	Afghanistan: Governor Daud.
FOI-6	9th November 2006	Afghanistan: Meeting with Musa Qaleh elders.
FOI-7	4th January 2007	Afghanistan: Governor Wafa in Kabul.
FOI-8	26th August 2007	Afghanistan: Meeting with Helmand MPs, 23 August.
FOI-9	March 2009	Extract from Rule of Law and Development in Regional Command (South) – The Way Forward.
FOI-10	Undated (but from 2010)	Extract from PRT Weekly - Governance in Sangin District.
FOI-11	22nd March 2010	Afghanistan/Helmand: Making Progress In Sangin.
FOI-12	3rd August 2010	Sangin Update: CIVCAS allegations.
FOI-13	9th December 2010	Afghanistan/Reintegration: Is the Ball Now Rolling in Helmand?
FOI-14	14th December 2010	Afghanistan/Reintegration: Signs Of Progress In The Sangin Valley.
FOI-15	12th January 2011	Sangin - Latest Developments.
FOI-16	23rd January 2011	Sangin Peace Accord.
FOI-16A	23rd January 2011	Sangin - Options For Civil Support.
FOI-17	7th March 2011	Afghanistan/Helmand: Reintegration - Progress and Challenges.
FOI-18	8th March 2011	Afghanistan/Helmand: Sangin Peace Agreement
FOI-19	20th June 2011	Afghanistan/Helmand: Sangin Peace Accord Six Months On.
FOI-20	Undated (estimated September 2011)	Sangin Deputy District Governor on north Helmand District Governors' conference, GIRoA-elders dialogue
FOI-21	3rd April 2012	The successful District Community Council election in Helmand's Sangin District represents a major milestone of progress.

Figure B-1: UK Government documents released under the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

Annex C: Pashtun tribal structures

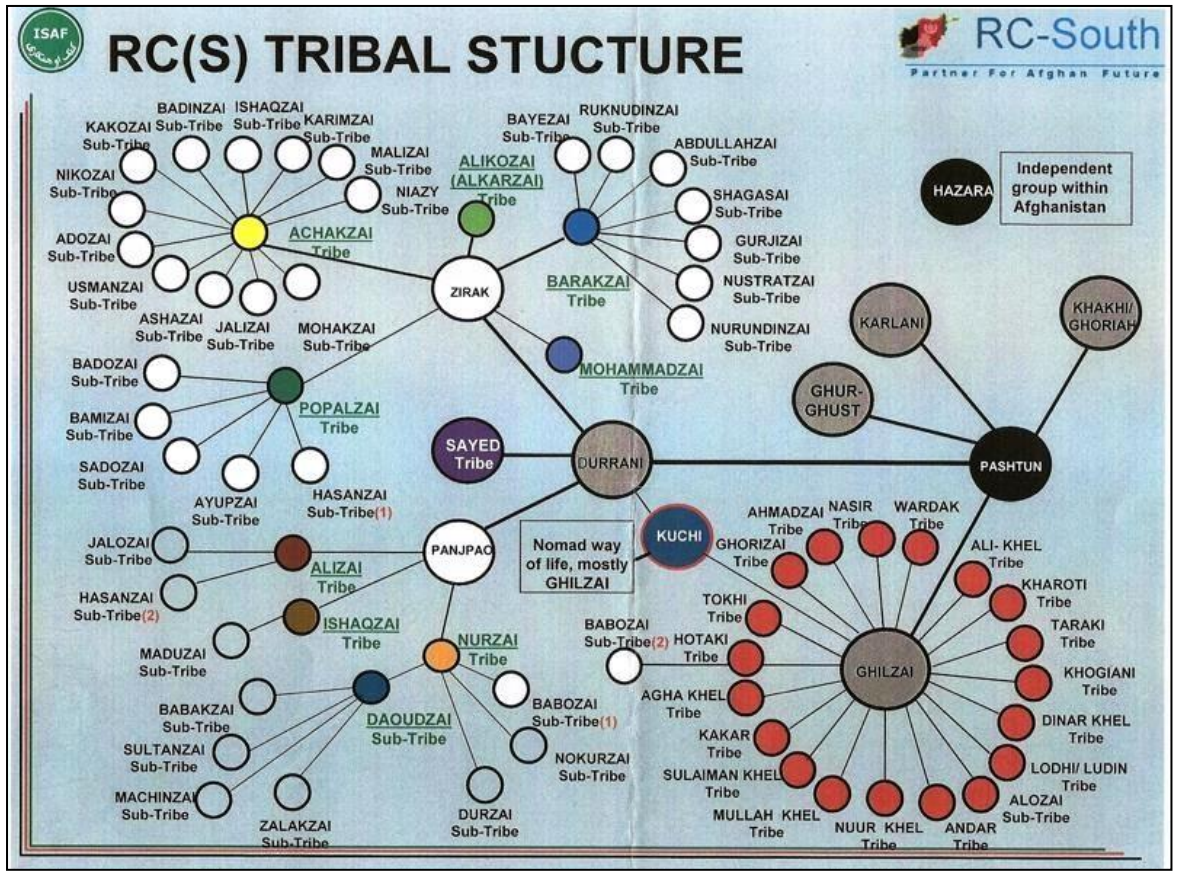

Figure C-1: ISAF's own taxonomy of Pashtun tribal structure.[1047]

Overview

This is a representation of the Pashtun tribal structure.

The first distinction is between the two most numerous groups, the Durrani Federation (roughly south-western) and the Ghilzai (south-eastern).

Within the Durrani Federation, the Zirak branch is historically the more favoured and prestigious, and the Kings of Afghanistan have come from these tribes.

The Panjpai (literally, five fingers) is perceived to be the lesser branch, and central authority tends to exclude these. It is little surprise that the Taliban have heavy support within these tribes.

[1047] ISAF Regional Command (South), "The Tribes of Southern Afghanistan," http://hansdevreij.com/, 2010, (accessed 20th June 2015). The date for this analysis is not clear, but the (apparently Dutch) source indicates this data came from his personal archive. The Dutch led Regional Command (South) from 1st November 2008 – 1st November 2009.

Annex D: The Times trails the possibility of an Accord in Sangin, August 2010

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The holiday gamble that didn't pay off for online fraud suspect
Page 32

World

Tribal uprising against Taleban could take hundreds of insurgents out of the conflict

VERONIQUE DE VIGUERIE / WPN

Afghanistan

Tom Coghlan Sangin

British commanders believe that they are close to achieving a significant tribal uprising against the Taleban which could lead to the reintegration of hundreds of insurgents fighting around Sangin, the most dangerous place in Afghanistan.

Officials have spent more than a year in delicate negotiation with tribal groups in and around the town in central Helmand where more than a hundred British soldiers have been killed.

The number of violent incidents in Sangin has fallen by about 80 per cent in the past month. British commanders believe this is partly the result of tribal leaders delivering on a promise to restrain tribal elements aligned with the Taleban and to expel the insurgents.

"We have been pushing for this for 12 months," Colonel Paul James, commander of 40 Commando battlegroup in Sangin, said. "They have responded positively. They are certainly

Figure D-1: The Times headline in August 2010, five months before the Sangin Accord was announced.[1048]

[1048] Coghlan, 13th August 2010, o*p. cit.*,

Annex E: Afghanistan's ethnicities by region

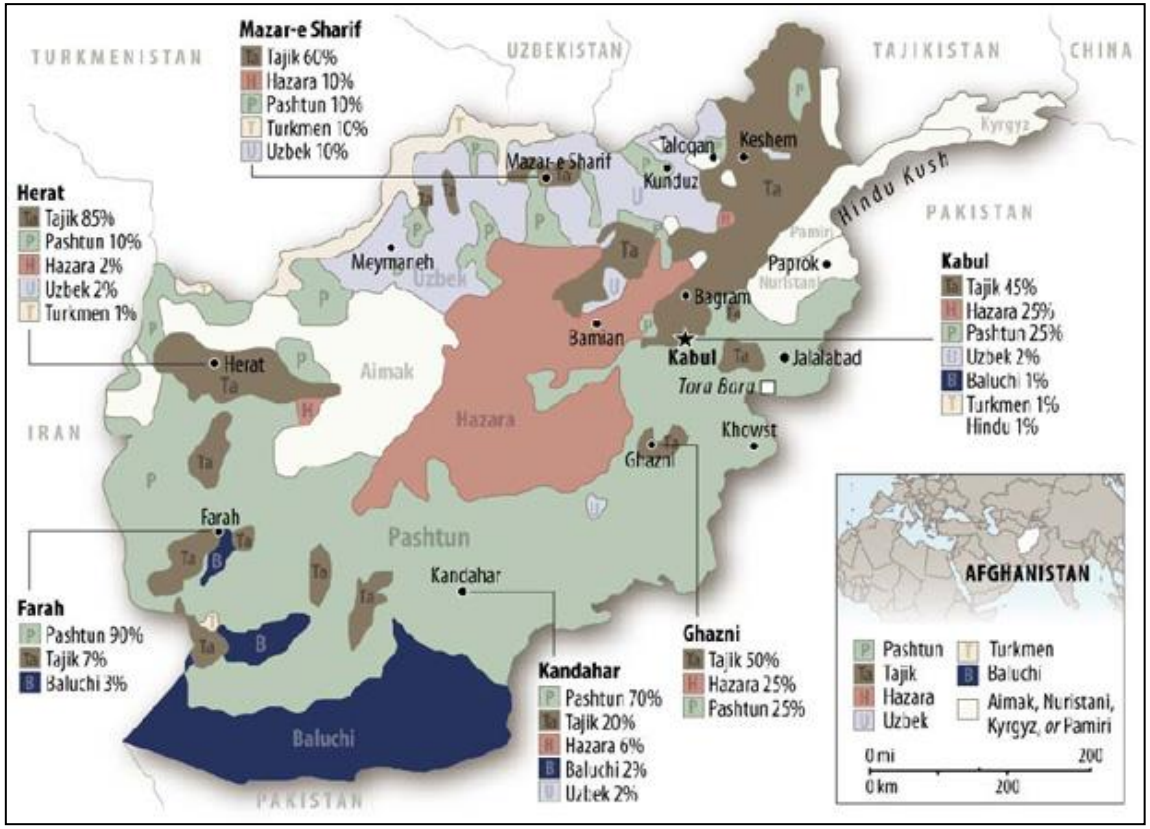

Figure E-1: Afghanistan's ethnicities by region.[1049]

[1049] Map produced by the US Congressional Research Service, and published in Zachary Laub, "US Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounders: The Taliban in Afghanistan," 4th July 2014, http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/taliban-afghanistan/p10551#(accessed 12th February 2015).

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